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The magazine for Adobe® Photoshop® professionals **136**

PLUS

Paint fantasy
landscapes

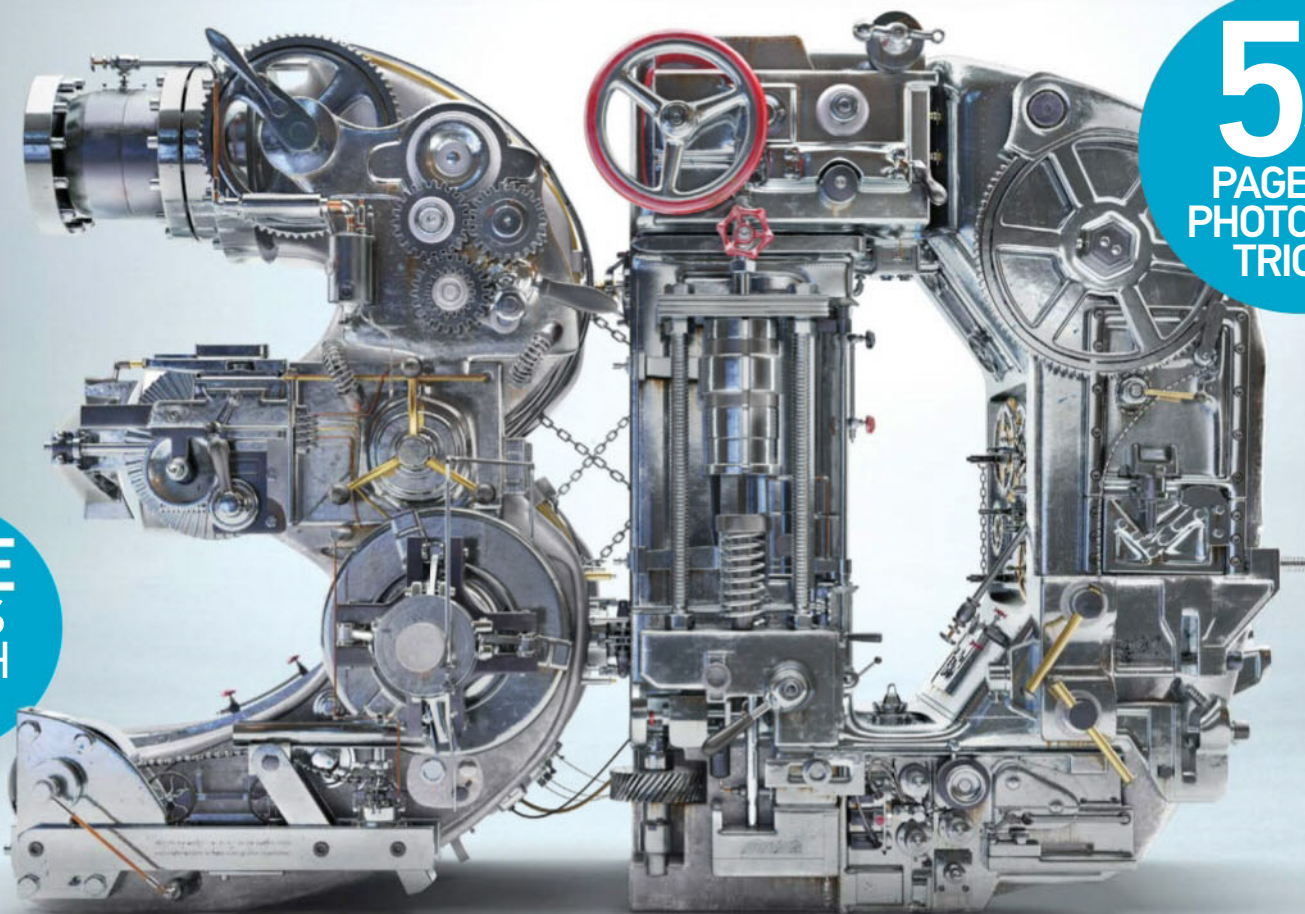
Inside Krippa

Design Studio

Natalie Shau's
pro techniques

Put to the test:

Texture Exporter



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53
PAGES OF
PHOTOSHOP
TRICKS

PHOTOSHOP & 3D: THE PROFESSIONAL GUIDE

Pro artists explain their techniques for incredible 3D images
including lighting rules, adding textures and using render passes



**CREATE A
SCI-FI CITY**

Combine photos and textures
for out-of-this-world results



■ **DYNAMIC PHOTO ART**
MOVIE POSTERS
The Photoshop tricks you need
to produce stunning imagery



■ **PRO DESIGN TECHNIQUES**
25 QUICK FIXES
Speed up your workflow with
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50 HOW I MADE: SKY CAPITAL

Frank Att challenged himself to paint this city in the sky – discover how he did it on p50

IN THIS ISSUE...



APRIL MADDEN
Editor

COVER IMAGE

ANDREI LACATUSU
andreilacatusu.tumblr.com

This beautiful 3D artwork from Andrei Lacatusu combines basic modelling in 3ds Max with extensive post-production in Photoshop to make the image really shine. Find out how he did it in our feature on p26.



Working with 3D is generally something you expect to do outside of Photoshop. However, with Adobe teasing new 3D features in Photoshop CC in addition to the ever-advancing toolkit that's already present, more of the 3D pipeline than ever before is being pulled into our favourite program. On p26, professional 3D artists share their tips and techniques for working with 3D using Photoshop. You can find out how our beautiful cover was created and get all the files you need to make it yourself – no 3D software required!

Elsewhere in the magazine, Photoshop expert Andre Villanueva explains how you can use shapes, layers and masks to create a classic displacement effect on p44, while artist Joe Roberts shows you how to use ordinary photos of buildings and scenes to build up an incredible sci-fi cityscape on p54. Meanwhile, retouching master John Ross explains how to turn an ordinary portrait photo into a

superhero movie poster on p62. On p68, we round up a selection of 25 of the best quick fixes for Photoshop professionals, helping you to speed up your workflow and save yourself time with useful advice from industry experts. Plus, you can learn how to add some real-world texture to your Photoshop art by creating your own watercolour textures and brushes with the project on p90.

As ever, we're also showcasing some of the best Photoshop talent out there. On p10 we take a detailed look at the inspiration behind Natalie Shau's eerily beautiful works, while on p86 reader and professional concept artist Riyahd Cassiem shares some of the secrets of his success. Check out fresh young Swedish design studio Krippa Design on p18, and discover how artists Bartosz Kosowski, Frank Att, Raphael Jiya and Matheus Lopes (aka Mathiole) created some of their incredible works. Plus there's a huge selection of fantastic creative resources for you to use on FileSilo. Enjoy the issue!

INSIDE:

3D



DISPLACEMENT



SCI-FI COMPOSITES



MOVIE POSTERS



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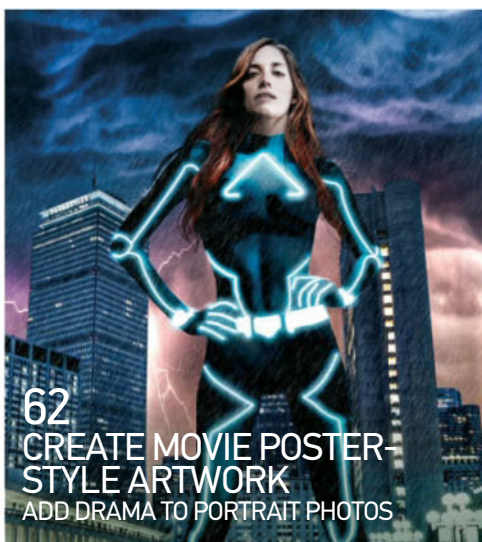
COMBINE BUILDINGS INTO A CITYSCAPE



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HOW I MADE: SKY CAPITAL

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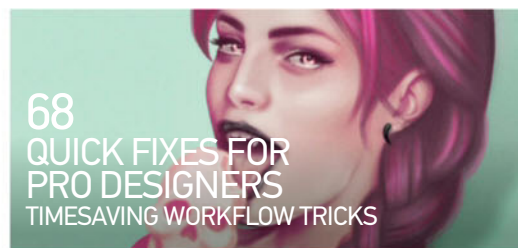
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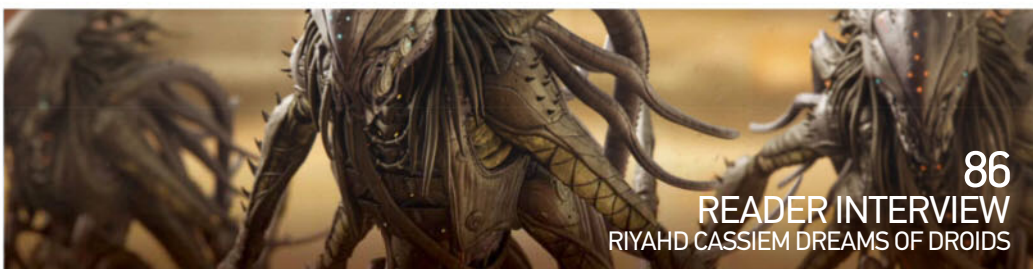
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RIYAH D CASSIEM DREAMS OF DROIDS

ADVANCED PHOTOSHOP® PRO PANEL

MEET THE PROFESSIONALS SHARING THEIR PHOTOSHOP
EXPERTISE AND TECHNIQUES IN THIS ISSUE



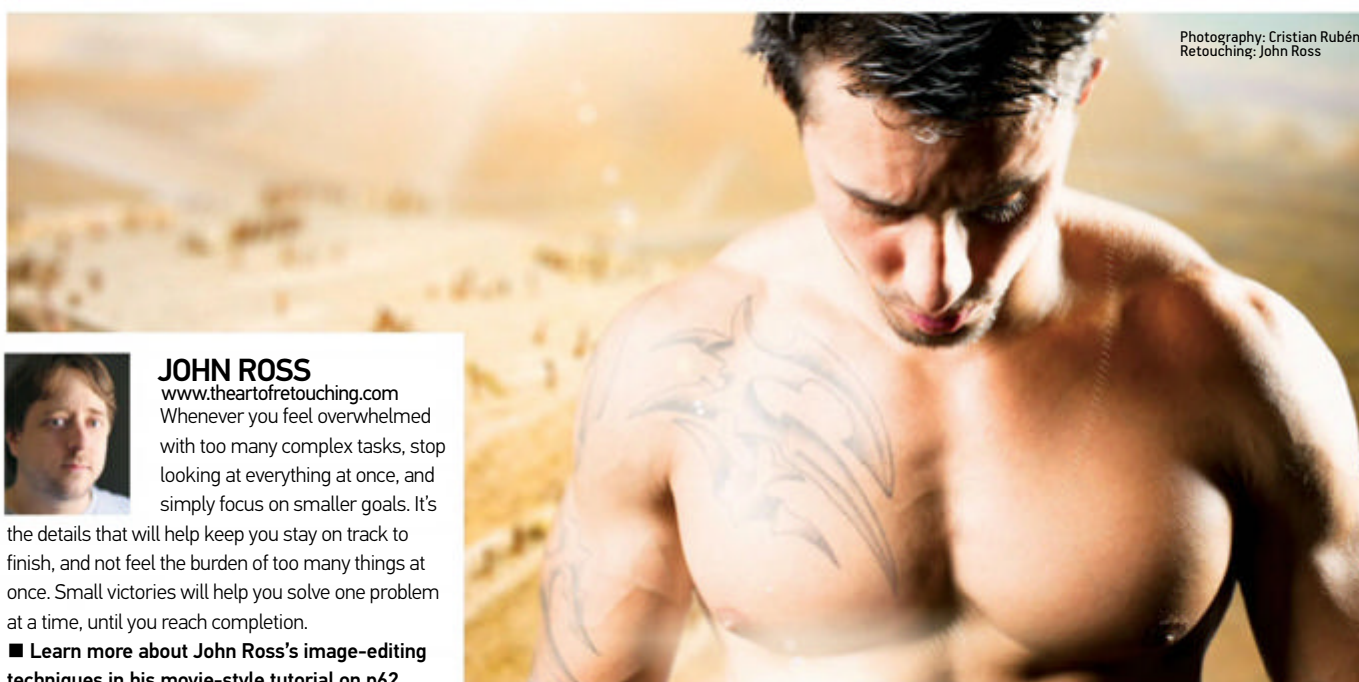
ANDREI LACATUSU
andreilacatusu.tumblr.com

Time is of the essence when you work on a project, and to be as efficient as possible, you should start by using the keyboard shortcuts as much as possible. I also set up additional shortcuts for many other tools, filters and commands, such as Gaussian Blur, Smart Sharpen, Save for Web or plug-ins that I often use.

■ Discover how Andrei Lacatusu combines 3D and Photoshop in the complete guide to 3D, starting on p26



© Andrei Lacatusu



Photography: Cristian Rubén
Retouching: John Ross



JOHN ROSS
www.theartofretouching.com

Whenever you feel overwhelmed with too many complex tasks, stop looking at everything at once, and simply focus on smaller goals. It's

the details that will help keep you stay on track to finish, and not feel the burden of too many things at once. Small victories will help you solve one problem at a time, until you reach completion.

■ Learn more about John Ross's image-editing techniques in his movie-style tutorial on p62



ANDRE VILLANUEVA
www.000-000-0000.com

Just as an astute chef masters all culinary tools to be able to focus on ultimate flavour, you should strive for domination over every facet of Photoshop. Learn shortcuts for tools and commands. Know the filters and blend modes. Familiarise yourself with menus and options and settings. As you gain proficiency, you'll have

more and more time to just create.

■ Get creative with Photoshop's tools as Andre Villanueva walks you through creating a displacement effect on p44



© Andre Villanueva

“Time is of the essence when you work on a project, and to be as efficient as possible, you should start by using the keyboard shortcuts as much as possible”

ANDREI LACATUSU / ANDREILACATUSU.TUMBLR.COM

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SLASHTHREE RELAUNCHES

THE INTERNATIONAL ART COLLECTIVE PRESENTS
AN EXCITING NEW VISION ALONGSIDE ITS
LATEST PROJECT, DISCOVERY

With over 100 core artists from 42 countries, more than 2,600 submissions, and almost 11,000 supporters, Slashthree is definitely an artist platform to be aware of: empowering creatives of multiple disciplines to network, push their capabilities further, and gain recognition on a global scale.

"The collective was formed as a response to a gap in the online digital art community," remembers Tariq Adawi, who founded Slashthree in 2007. "There were many outlets for creatives to share their work, but they consisted of largely isolated experiences that didn't provide informative and constructive critiques. Even fewer outlets were facilitating any form of collaboration or sharing between individuals, and we felt this largely deprived artists of a valuable experience through which they could grow. At the time, we knew we wanted to create something that would help us all grow together."

The site was ultimately launched complete with a discussion forum to help artists develop their skills

with each other, and the community took off faster than Adawi could have ever imagined. On the eve of the international art collective's 3,000th day of operations, Slashthree relaunched with an updated platform, vision, and new online exhibition called Discovery, filled with all the high quality art, illustration, music, and photography that the collective is best known for.

With a focus on detailing their journeys as artists and who they've become since joining the collective, the Slashthree core crafted over fifty unique submissions to prepare for the launch.

"The concept of Discovery came from challenging our understanding of who we are – both as individual artists and as a collective," explains creative director Husam Elfaki, who designed Slashthree's newly updated platform. Through it, the collective hopes to propel its artistic presence to even more of an all-time high with new elements such as heavy involvement in real-world projects and causes.

"We found that our new perspective on Slashthree's future was a big opportunity for introspection," Elfaki continues, "so we wanted artists to confidently share their identity through craft. There's something extremely powerful about revisiting your own personal trajectory over time and documenting that journey, so we wanted to capitalise on that in the most compelling way we could."

Works for the exhibition, which will be Slashthree's 22nd to date, are both created by veteran members Neil Hanvey, Benny Brand, Anthony Giacomino, and newcomers Conrado Salinas, Brock Hofer, Chris Connors, as well as many others. With the addition of nine of his elegant works, though, it was longtime member, digital artist Isaac Burton who ultimately stood out to the collective as being Discovery's featured artist.

To take part in Slashthree's new evolution, be sure to apply as artist to the collective's core at artistcenter.slashthree.com/application/new, or learn more information and take a peek at the art of Discovery at www.slashthree.com.



Black Hole Soliloquy by Isaac Burton:
Burton's series of seven pieces for the
Discovery exhibition tackle the interaction
between emotion and science

“At the time, we knew we wanted to create something
that would help us all grow together”

Tariq Adawi, Founder of Slashthree



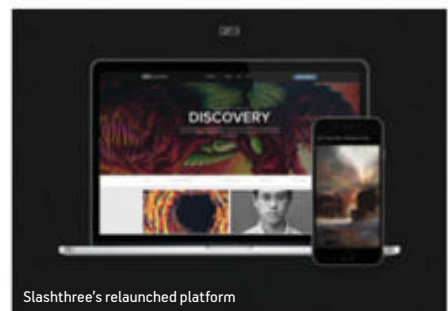
Beekeeper by Isaac Burton: Burton's workflow initially starts with paper and pencil, completing several quick composition sketches before doing a more full drawing with all the outlines and basic shapes in place. This then gets photographed and brought into Photoshop

■ LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

So far the relaunch has been very well received, setting up the groundwork for more projects for Slashthree – allowing both Adawi and Elfaki to start looking to the future. "The new launch is our first step in a path towards more tangible success for our collective's artists," says Elfaki. "While Discovery was about allowing artists to express their personal stories, our new platform hopes to further amplify the artists to a much greater extent than ever before. In doing so we hope to use our skills to highlight real-world issues and causes in a way that only art can do."

"Art is one of the most valuable pieces of the human experience, and our ultimate goal with this release was to redefine Slashthree as a group that uses art to inspire positive change and self-reflection," adds Adawi. "In pursuing this goal we believe we can make a difference simply by doing more of what we love and continuing to share it with the world."

The team have already begun to promote exclusive content including limited edition print giveaways to anyone inspired by Slashthree, and are excited to pull together plans that will give back to the creative community through resources, materials, and insights exclusively from the Slashthree collective.



Slashthree's relaunched platform

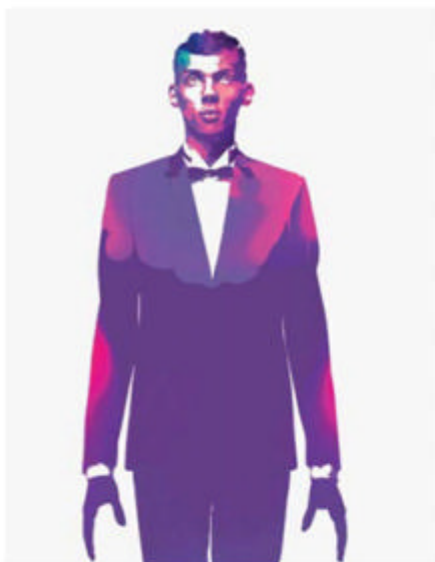
BRAM VANHAEREN SHOWS OFF THE #ANIWALL PROJECT

AN ADOBE 25 UNDER 25 WINNER HAS NOW PUBLISHED AN EXCITING NEW PORTRAITURE PROJECT

At only 24 years old, Digital Artist Bram Vanhaeren was ecstatic when he recently learned he'd been selected for Adobe's 25 under 25: a campaign launched to celebrate Photoshop's 25th anniversary where a search was officially launched for the best creative visual artists around the globe that were under 25 years old.

Originally from Antwerp in Belgium, Vanhaeren has now been using Photoshop for ten years. "I didn't understand a single word of English when I started working with Photoshop," he reveals. "A couple of years later I decided to go to a creative school to study commercial design. That is, until they kicked me out after six months. The reason? I wasn't allowed to work with any Adobe program! I had to draw my designs by hand and well, I'm a terrible drawer. My teachers told me I was by far the worst illustrator of my year – my portraits got rated 3/20."

On a mission to prove his teachers wrong, Vanhaeren began sharing his work on Behance, and after being selected as one of the young artists for 25 Under 25 had his work presented to all of Adobe's followers on



Facebook and Instagram to ultimately receive over 6,000 likes and 100 comments on Facebook alone. Now, he has launched a new project, #AniWall – a collection of animated portrait illustrations depicting Vanhaeren's favourite famous artists.

ART HIVE ONLINE GOES LIVE

THE NEW ONLINE ART GALLERY RETAILER OPENS ITS ONLINE DOORS

Art Hive Online – a brand new curated online art gallery marketplace – has officially just launched at www.arthiveonline.com.

Promising to provide artists with an interactive platform that stimulates, educates, facilitates social and business interactions through the way the new website has been designed, the Art Hive Online team has described the intent to increase artist exposure through targeted marketing as ease of access and reach is provided to both art enthusiasts and most importantly, the online art buying audience.

"The art market is currently in a democratisation phase both creatively and commercially. Both artists and art enthusiasts are empowered by the reach and access of a platform like Art Hive Online," said Oyin Charles, Founder and CEO. "As much as we believe that the traditional galleries still have a role, we strongly feel that online art hubs like ours are here to stay. Art buyers get to discover art and gain access to a wide variety of original artworks on their own terms, at their convenience, using any online platform of their



choice without the unnecessary pressures of the traditional marketplace. Likewise, the artists now have access to a wider online buying audience across a larger demographic much faster than before."

As well as sharing and promoting art, Art Hive Online will also be sharing related information such as artist interviews and photo slideshows to give viewers a more intimate experience of an artists' work as well as educating collectors and enthusiasts with tips for collecting, discussions of art events, or by featuring new artists as the online art gallery continues to grow.

ADOBE INCREASES 3D CAPABILITIES IN PHOTOSHOP CC

A FORTHCOMING RELEASE OF CC WILL FEATURE ENHANCED TOOLS AND FUNCTIONS FOR 3D ARTISTS

Adobe has announced a raft of new features to further enhance Photoshop CC's 3D capabilities. The new content adds support for additional 3D printers and file types, and gives artists greater control over polygons, textures and colour. The release date for the latest update to Photoshop CC was still to be confirmed at the time of going to press, but with the new content announced at the 3D Printshows in New York and London, we expect these features to be arriving in the Creative Cloud very soon.



MESH SIMPLIFICATION

The Simplify Mesh command will allow you to reduce the number of polygons in a 3D model, making the resolution and file size smaller. This is perfect for speeding up your workflow when you don't need to work at ultra high resolution, and also for sharing your 3D models on the web.



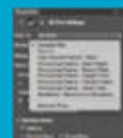
BUMP MAPS FROM PHOTOS

Use any of your photos as a bump map to create texture on your 3D models. You will be able to convert photos into 3D textures and control the height and depth of the emboss or imprint for full creative control.



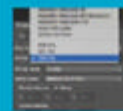
CONVERT VERTEX COLOURS

The new Vertex Color to Texture Conversion will allow you to capture and edit colours from a 3D scanned object as a Photoshop texture.



SUPPORT FOR 3D HUBS

You can now print your 3D models via local printer network 3D Hubs, meaning that you can print your models with the 3D Hubs service practically anywhere in the world.



NEW FILE TYPES

Photoshop will now support, save and print SVX and 3D PDF files, making saving and printing models more efficient.



SUPPORT FOR TINKERINE DITTOPRO

Photoshop will support the Tinkerine DittoPro 3D printer in addition to a range of other brands and models, giving you more choice if you're looking at buying a 3D printer.



www.behance.net/
natalieshou
@NatalieShau

AN ALLURING BEAUTIFUL NIGHTMARE

NATALIE SHAU IS A DIGITAL ARTIST BASED IN VILNIUS, LITHUANIA WHOSE VISION BRINGS FORTH TWISTED FAIRYTALES THAT FILL THE VIEWER WITH TEMPTATION AND HORROR

When viewing the digital creations of artist Natalie Shau, you instantly step into a mystical realm. Imagine riding an ornate horse from a carousel through a land where you encounter wondrous fairytale-like characters, as well as creatures that dwell in your darkest nightmares. Infusing photography, illustration and 3D design into her work she transports you into a world where anything is possible, the darkness can become beautiful and pretty things can quickly turn wicked.

HOW DID YOU DEVELOP YOUR SKILLS?

I developed my digital art skills on my own. I am a self-taught digital artist and photographer. I do not think nowadays that you have to learn about photomanipulation in school or take special courses. There is so much learning material available online for free. Numerous artists have created special tutorials dedicated to that subject. Also the best way to learn is by practicing. You can find out what suits you best, what techniques you can use by actually creating and editing your own photos. But I did have art classes in school. I also attended private drawing classes. For a year, I studied graphic design in Central

Saint Martins College in London. However, I noticed that graphic design was not what I really wanted to do. I am more into photography and photo art.

OVER TIME ARTISTS GO THROUGH AN EVOLUTION. HOW HAS YOUR WORK EVOLVED SINCE YOU BEGAN?

Evolution is natural for every creative person. I learned so much during the first ten years of my career. The technical aspects of my work improved of course, but this is not the main value. For me, the importance is that the technical skills allow me to feel more free and capable of expressing my visions better. Also my taste and interest changed. Now I am very interested in mixing different styles to create something unique. For instance combining fashion and styles from different eras. I use modern symbols in combination with historical events.

HOW HAS DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMED THE WAY YOU CREATE NEW ARTWORK?

For me as a digital photographer a very important role in the creative process are the improvements of digital cameras. The possibility to have very high

resolution and crisp images is simply amazing. This helps a lot! Being able to see the results in the camera, then the possibility to download and use the photos immediately after the photo session makes the whole process so much faster and more convenient. The same goes for scanners, graphic tablets, etc. I am grateful that I live in a time where we have access to all this equipment.

AS A WORKING ARTIST IN LITHUANIA WERE THERE ANY OBSTACLES THAT YOU FACED AND IF SO HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THEM?

When I started learning and creating digital photo art, very few people believed it could be a career. So I had a pressure to choose another speciality or something more normal. Being a banker or a doctor, etc. And still today, I can say that not all people here

“I really love the tragic characters of Dostoevsky, they are so full of pain, but at the same time they strive for justice and beauty”



Adobe Logo: Before doing a photo shoot for your photo art project, it is quite useful to know what kind of light angle you will need. This will enable you to combine your images easily



Dream of Winter: This piece was done for a show at the Dorothy Circus gallery in Rome that also featured Ray Caesar. The girl is seen daydreaming about a winter wonderland filled with white deer



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In Disguise: The forest surrounding the girl was created utilising less saturated colours. The dusty green plants allow the red cape to become a focal point. This contrast draws the viewer in

value creative careers, some think that it is just a hobby and it is easy to do. I am very lucky; I work mostly with foreign clients and galleries. I do not need to prove to anyone my work has value and that creative people have to be paid the same as any other professionals.

YOU ARE A MASTER AT WHAT YOU CREATE. HOW DO YOU FIND YOUR INSPIRATION AND WHERE DO YOUR IDEAS COME FROM?

I find my inspiration everywhere in the world around me. Nature is a great source of inspiration. All colours and patterns... Plants, water, fog, and rain. I am also inspired by historical fashion and architecture. But I also find a lot of interesting ideas in the modern symbols of our time.

HOW DOES LITERATURE PLAY A PART IN YOUR CHARACTER DESIGNS?

I really love the tragic characters of Dostoevsky, they are so full of pain, but at the same time they strive for justice and beauty. Dostoevsky was the person [that] said that beauty would save the world. And I love the mysterious and even scary atmosphere of some of Gogol's stories. He of course took a lot from Russian folklore: witches, mermaids, etc. I think folklore in general is a great source of inspiration for artists.

FASHION PLAYS A BIG ROLE IN YOUR CREATIONS. ARE YOU INFLUENCED BY FASHION DESIGNERS?

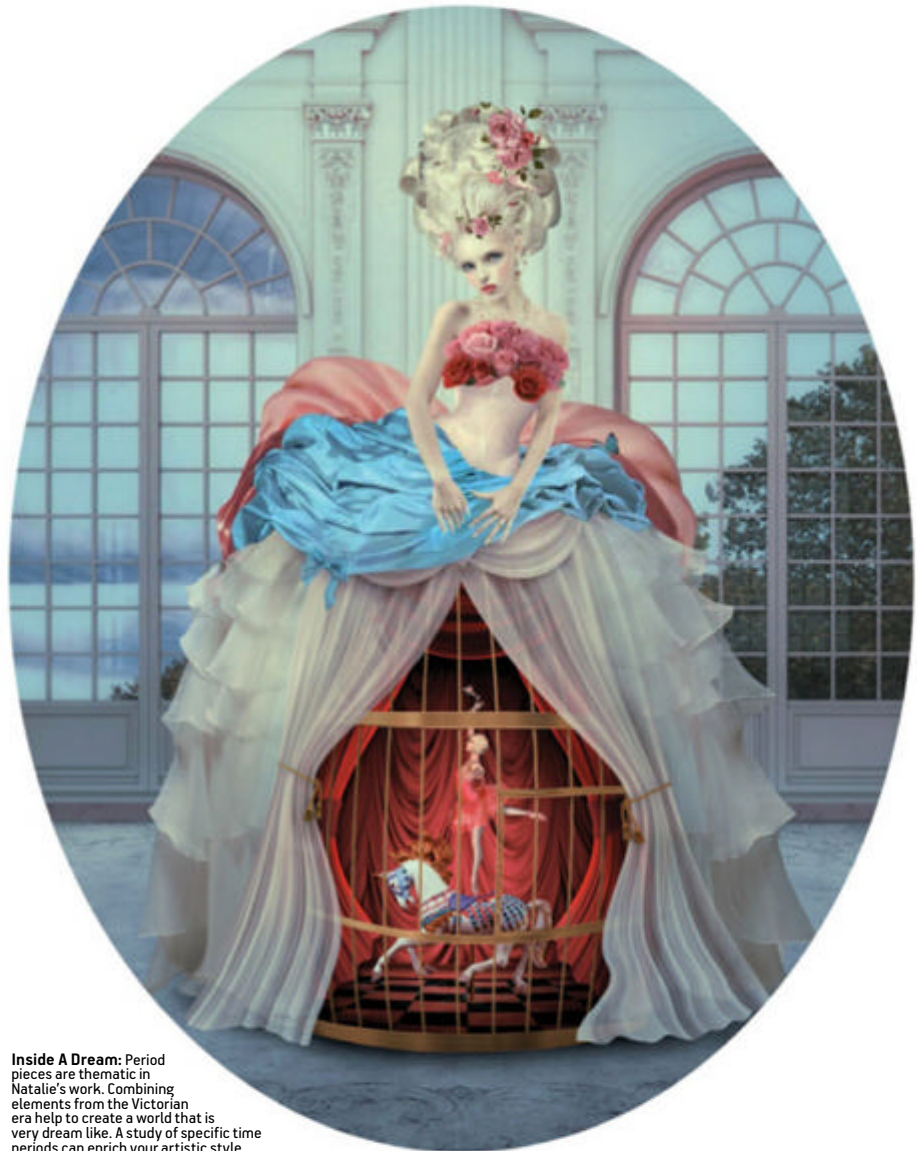
Fashion designers are a huge part of my inspiration. My two most loved designers are Alexander McQueen and Eiko Ishioka who created costumes for movies... Historical fashion plays a big part as well.

WHAT DO YOU FEEL SEPARATES YOUR ARTWORK FROM THE OTHERS?

It will sound surprising, but my personality. Even through my work, I believe that the most important part is to evolve as a human being, and when I develop my personality it will reflect in my work too. It's a win-win situation. My work is not about my visual talent, it is more about adding tons of tiny details. Most importantly it's about good communication with your client and people around you, having a helpful attitude, solving problems, staying organised and not overloading yourself. I try to do all of these things.

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE FOR YOU TO COMPLETE THE ADOBE REMIX PROJECT AND CAN YOU SHARE THE PROCESS?

Well I do not remember exactly the time frame now since it was almost two years ago. I used myself as a model and made [a] special photo session for that in the photo studio. And then I worked with those images to create scenery. I had



Inside A Dream: Period pieces are thematic in Natalie's work. Combining elements from the Victorian era help to create a world that is very dream like. A study of specific time periods can enrich your artistic style

“Some people may be so shy that even being beautiful will not help them look great in photos. Thus I try to find those who really enjoy being in front of the camera”

to incorporate the Adobe logo into my usual style of work. I decided to create a beautiful garden, where the logo is a topiary covered with flowers, which supports two girls leaning on it. With that I wanted to show that Adobe is really supporting creatives all over the world.

HOW DO YOU CAST THE MODELS THAT APPEAR IN YOUR PROJECTS?

Here in Lithuania we have so many beautiful girls who work part-time as models. We also have several tall people. So it is not really difficult to find great models. But the main part is not even the looks, but the ability to open up to the camera. Some people may be so shy that even being beautiful will

not help them look great in photos. Thus I try to find those who really enjoy being in front of the camera.

YOU HAVE APPEARED IN SOME OF YOUR WORK, WHEN DID YOU FIRST DECIDE TO DO THIS AND WAS THERE A SPECIAL REASON?

Actually, I was my main model for all my first projects, and I continue to do self-portraits today. For me it is very easy, as I know exactly what I want to express in my work.

WHAT SPECIAL TECHNIQUES DID YOU USE TO CREATE THE PIECE IN DISGUISE?

It was done for a ballet about Red Riding Hood. Where she was actually a scary werewolf. That's why

she is holding the wolf mask. This is classic photomanipulation, where I combined all the scenery and plants from different photos. The photo of the model was taken in the studio. I rented a special costume for this occasion.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVOURITE PHOTOSHOP TOOLS AND HOW DO YOU UTILISE THEM IN YOUR WORK?

I would say [the] Camera Blur filter, [as] it helps create more natural depth of field blur.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE PIECE THAT YOU HAVE CREATED? DID IT INVOLVE ANYTHING PARTICULARLY SPECIAL?

I really enjoy how *Eclipse* turned out. This image was inspired by one of my favourite artists, Eiko Ishioka. She was a costume designer who worked for movies like *The Cell*, *The Fall*, and *Bram Stoker's Dracula* by Francis Ford Coppola. I hope this work was able to portray even [a] small particle of the mood of her great costumes. This work was created in 2012, when Ishioka passed away.

YOUR CLIENT LIST IS GROWING: SONY MUSIC, CENTURY MEDIA, NUCLEAR BLAST, OGILVY & MATHER, AND TRISOL. HOW DO YOU FIND YOUR CLIENTS?

I do not search for clients, all the people and companies that I have worked with actually wrote to me with propositions for various projects. I enjoy working on any project where I

“I am also inspired by historical fashion and architecture. But I also find a lot of interesting ideas in the modern symbols of our time”

can incorporate my style and vision, rather than just plain technical skills. I really love when the client trusts my taste and gives me freedom to visualise the idea that they need.

DO YOU HAVE ANY DREAM CLIENTS THAT YOU WOULD LOVE TO WORK FOR AND WHY?

I would love to work with people like Bjork or FKA Twigs. Their music and style is just so appealing to me. I would also love to work for a fashion company, where I could create illustration to print on fabric so that people could wear my artwork.

IF YOU COULD EXPERIMENT IN ANOTHER MEDIUM, WHICH MEDIUM WOULD IT BE?

I think I would love to experiment with 3D character design and try to print it in [a] 3D printer to create [a] real figurine from my artwork.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO ANYONE WHO IS LOOKING TO LAUNCH A CAREER IN DIGITAL ART AND ILLUSTRATION?

My advice is to be self-critical and always strive for perfection, work a lot and listen to people who could give you great advice in this field. But also do not pay attention to the people who want to put you down and make you feel that your effort is unworthy.

PORTFOLIO TIPS

NATALIE SHAU'S SECRETS TO CREATING STUNNING ARTWORK

■ **LIGHTING**

For your composition use images that are lit from the same direction. If your main figure is lit from the front, back or side; make sure that other objects are lit the same. You can always turn and flip [the] image, or overpaint the light and create shadows.

■ **SHARPEN**

If you want sharp and detailed artwork, always use photos with a sharp focus. If the image is not sharp you can sharpen it using a High Pass filter. For this you need to duplicate your image layer, change to Overlay mode over your original layer and go to Filters>Other> High Pass.

■ **BLUR FILTER**

When you paint something over a photo – for example improving skin tone, painting shadows, etc. and it doesn't look smooth enough – you can always use a Blur filter to blend shadows and light to make it better.

■ **PAINTING HAIR**

If you do not have brushes to paint hair, you can create your own by painting few black dots on a white background close to each other. Select this area and then Define Brush Preset, this will create your own unique brush. You can adjust brush settings in the Brush panel.

■ **DOLL EYES**

Want to create a doll-like look for your model by making her eyes larger? I do not suggest using the Liquify filter! It will make her look unrealistic and funny (unless this is your goal). You can enlarge an eye by selecting the area, then creating a separate layer. Then enlarge it with Free Transform.



Love and Doves: Natalie is fascinated by porcelain ball jointed dolls. Many of the characters that Natalie brings to life resemble these classic toys. This exudes a type of innocence in her work



Storm: It is very effective to use splashes of bright colour in an almost monochromatic work. This technique will focus the viewer and draw their attention. The usage of pink directs your attention to the girl's face



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HONOURING PRATCHETT

WE CATCH UP WITH AWARD-WINNING ILLUSTRATOR BARTOSZ KOSOWSKI TO FIND OUT ABOUT HIS ILLUSTRATION OF TERRY PRATCHETT'S DISCWORLD

ABOUT THE ARTIST

BARTOSZ KOSOWSKI

www.bartoszkosowski.com



Bartosz Kosowski is an illustrator based in Lodz, Poland.

Kosowski runs Blackbird Illustration studio, working on various projects from portraits to editorial illustrations. His Lolita poster for a San Francisco Stanley Kubrick exhibition recently received two gold medals from the Society of Illustrators New York and Los Angeles.

NAME OF PROJECT DISCWORLD

It's now been four years since award-winning illustrator Bartosz Kosowski first quit his regular job to focus solely on his art, and he's been gaining more and more recognition ever since, creating work for everything from the *New Yorker* to *Newsweek*. His illustrations have garnered him awards from American Illustration, European Design Awards and Associazione Culturale Good Design.

Kosowski's latest editorial illustration project, however, was more personal than most. He'd been commissioned to create his very own interpretation of Terry Pratchett's infamous Discworld for a double page opening illustration in *Wysokie Obcasy Extra* magazine.

"As a teenager I was a huge fan of Discworld and I read lots of Pratchett's books so you can imagine how excited I was about this particular commission," Kosowski begins. "Redrawing Discworld is a bit like re-interpreting John Lowe and Alan Lee's Middle-earth – there is always the risk that the fans will see that you did something wrong. So though the art director gave me total freedom and told me to do it my way, I didn't want to go too far away from the original concept."

Instead of creating the Discworld universe from scratch, Kosowski decided to re-interpret Josh Kirby's iconic Discworld illustration, bringing the familiar shapes and figures into his unique style. As with all his illustration work, Photoshop was crucial from the beginning.

HOW WERE YOU FIRST APPROACHED TO CREATE THIS BEAUTIFUL DISCWORLD PIECE FOR WYSOKIE OBCASY EXTRA MAGAZINE?

I have been working with *Wysokie Obcasy Extra* magazine for a few years now and I have done plenty of illustrations for them.

All these illustrations, however, had been editorial pieces for psychological articles on such issues as assertiveness, breaking up or positive thinking. So when the art director contacted me again with the idea of drawing a Discworld piece, it did come as a bit of surprise.

HOW DID YOU DEVELOP THE INITIAL IDEA, COMPOSITION, AND COLOUR PALETTE FOR THE PROJECT?

The task was to create a double page opening illustration that would be my own interpretation of [Pratchett's] Discworld.

The choice of composition was somehow limited by the page layout that I was provided with [just like most editorial-led illustration]. I knew that I had to leave some space on the left-hand side for the article title and the lead and therefore I had to focus on the right-hand side and place the focal point there.

Apart from that, I was free to do it 'my way', using the colours I like. I decided to go for the retro palette of muted browns and greens with a pinch of blue as I felt it would simply look good and would correspond with depictions of the Discworld universe that every Pratchett fan is familiar with.

WHICH WACOM CINTIQ DID YOU USE? WHAT DID YOU LIKE ABOUT USING IT?

I used the new Wacom Cintiq 27 HD touch and I must say that I like it quite a lot. Before I got it, I had used Intuos 5 L for a few years and though it worked really well for me, the Cintiq's biggest advantage is that you can work more freely. It is much closer to the analogue drawing experience and therefore more natural to use. Plus, the amount of pixels that you get here and the QHD display quality is absolutely fantastic.

Of course, being an early adopter, you have to deal with some glitches that hopefully will be ironed out eventually but overall, the new Cintiq experience is amazing.

I also use the Wacom Ergo stand and it does help a lot when you draw several hours a day. It lets you adjust the tablet to the position that is most convenient for you so that you don't have to lean over the screen all the time, which is definitely good for your back.

COULD YOU TAKE US THROUGH THE WORKFLOW THAT WENT BEHIND CREATING YOUR DISCWORLD ILLUSTRATION?

First, I did the research on the topic and went through all the possible Discworld interpretations that I could Google, studied the anatomy of the great sea turtles and elephants and then simply started sketching.

Once the sketch was ready and given the green light by the art director, I inked the piece digitally. This took me a while as the illustration is quite detailed and I always try to keep the linework very precise. Next, I began colouring the elements starting with the basic shapes such as the turtle's body or scales and then going



Self-portrait



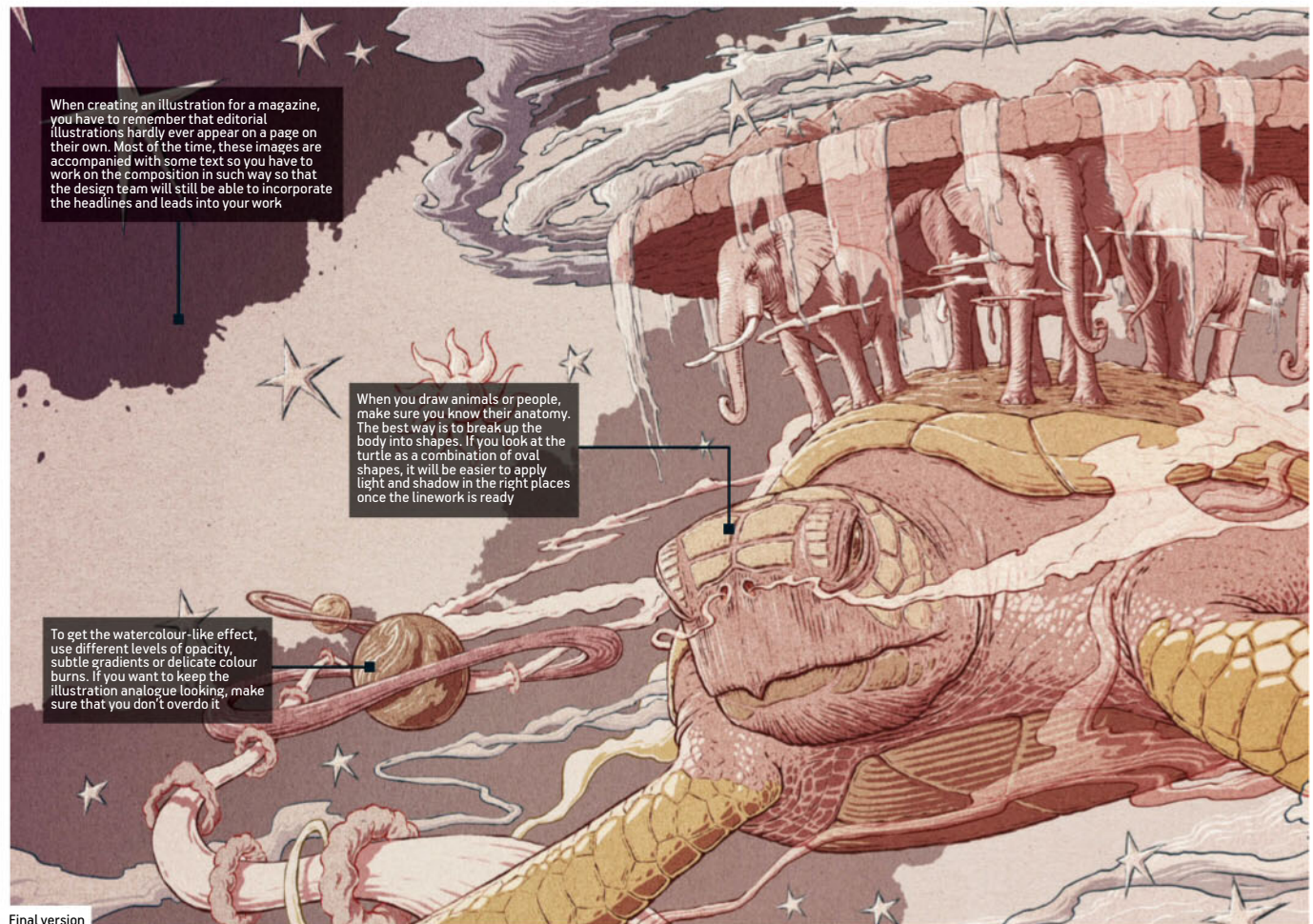
Making a start



Sketching



Alternative monochrome palette



Final version

When creating an illustration for a magazine, you have to remember that editorial illustrations hardly ever appear on a page on their own. Most of the time, these images are accompanied with some text so you have to work on the composition in such way so that the design team will still be able to incorporate the headlines and leads into your work

When you draw animals or people, make sure you know their anatomy. The best way is to break up the body into shapes. If you look at the turtle as a combination of oval shapes, it will be easier to apply light and shadow in the right places once the linework is ready

To get the watercolour-like effect, use different levels of opacity, subtle gradients or delicate colour burns. If you want to keep the illustration analogue looking, make sure that you don't overdo it

deeper into shades and light.

Finally, when the whole picture was coloured, the illustration got into what I call [the] post-production stage when I subtly changed the colours, worked with the opacity of some layers, added gradients and applied some filters to the whole image.

WHAT WERE THE MAIN PHOTOSHOP TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES YOU USED?

I think the most important thing in any illustration is a

decent drawing and a good array of brushes that you work with. I always start with a blue pencil sketch and ink my illustrations with the custom inking brushes. In this particular piece I used Kyle Webster's Dry Media brushes for inking as they let you to keep the traditional organic feel thanks to the brushes' shape dynamics and a bit of noise.

For the background I used my own hi-res paper texture onto which I applied different kinds of scanned splashes created manually with

watercolour and ink. I also applied the linear gradient (Normal or Color Burn) to some layers to make the illustration more vivid.

I use a lot of masking, opacity and subtle gradients or delicate colour burns to create watercolour-like effects. I really like the traditional look of the illustration and I believe that the key to this look is using the effects that Photoshop offers in a subtle way. If you overdo it, you lose the feel of a handmade drawing or painting and the illustration becomes digitally soulless.

KRIPPA DESIGN

MEET THE YOUNG DUO WORKING OUT OF A SMALL OFFICE, CREATING STRIKING ARTWORK FOR BIG NAMES IN THE DANCE MUSIC SCENE

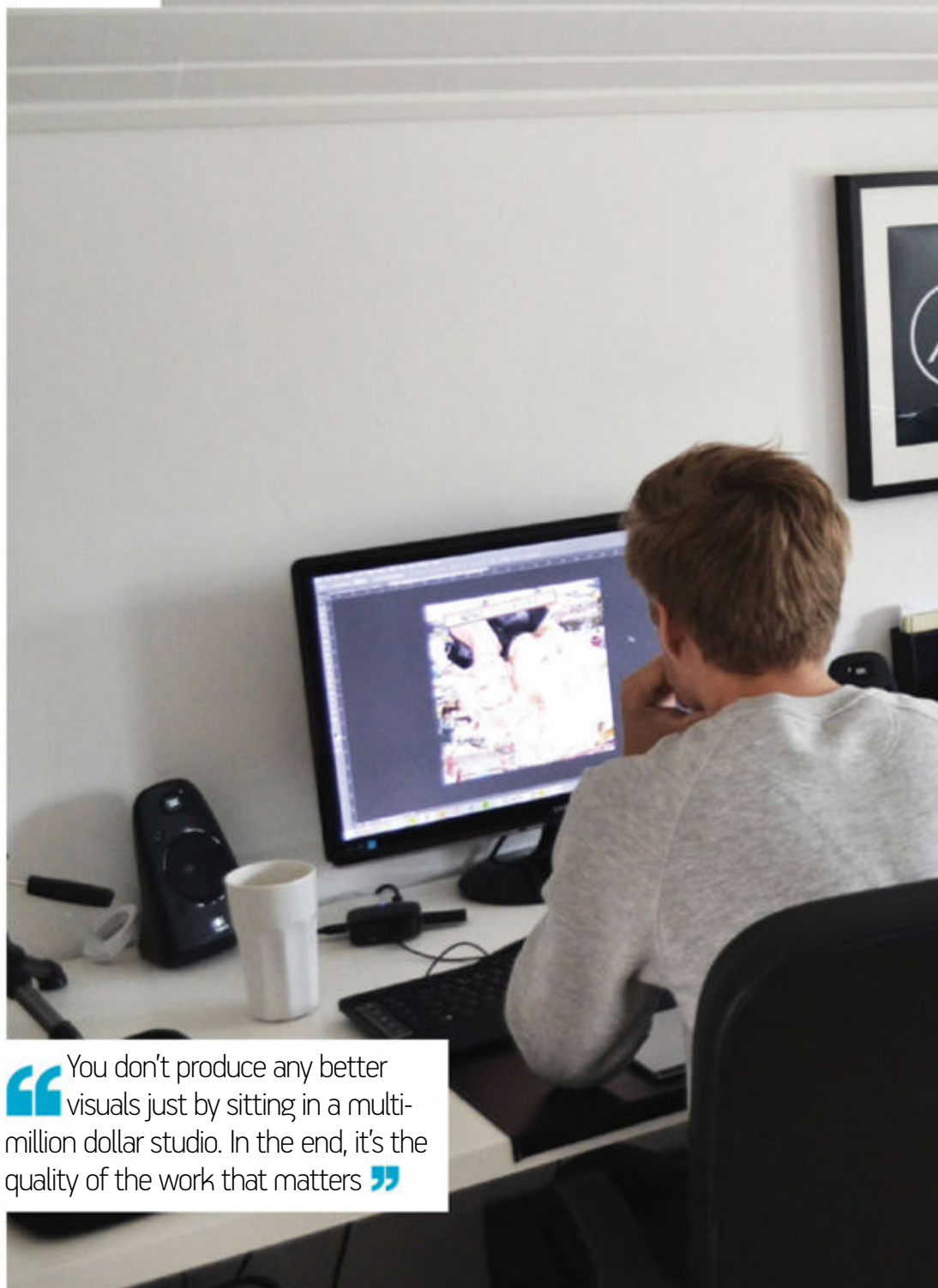
Meeet the design duo with youth on their side, proving that size isn't everything when it comes to building up a successful studio. Arvid Rehn and Christoffer Tunsäter, both 17-year-old Swedish high-school students, make up Krippa Design, working out of a home office and designing posters, flyers, cover art and more for some of the top names in the electronic dance music (EDM) scene.

Is being in your teens an advantage when working in this industry? "Sometimes yes, sometimes no," says Arvid. "Some bigger companies take advantage of our age, simply because we don't have such high rates compared to more developed design studios. [It is also] difficult to both keep work deadlines and have tests in school. Some clients appreciate our age and want to work with younger, new-thinking companies. Many of them compliment our age and are very impressed, [which is] always great to hear!"

Arvid and Christoffer set up the studio in May 2013 and began by working out of a small bedroom studio. Now, though, they have a newly renovated, clean office space, and although it is still based at Christoffer's place, as before, it is much more suited to the work that they are doing. They are happy with their space for now, saying that it perfectly fits their needs: "The renovating took a few months and we are now very happy with it. The place we work in isn't our top priority though; we believe that the work could be done anytime and anywhere, as long as you have a computer. You don't produce any better visuals just by sitting in a multi-million dollar studio. In the end, it's the quality of the work that matters."

The office space itself is clean and fresh, with a monochrome theme and simple lines. There is very little clutter to be seen, which is deliberate, explains Arvid: "Sometimes you can sit down for hours [and] just [be] irritated by a desk full of crap. At Krippa, we keep our desks clean and we use the time to work on projects instead. The studio consists of light-coloured elements, which makes everything fresh."

The small space houses everything that they need to run their business. Christoffer uses a custom-made PC most of the time, sometimes with a Wacom Intuos tablet. Away from the office he uses a MacBook Air for fast edits on the move. "But I don't start any new big projects on it," he says. "My Mac is only for the purpose of making fast small changes and edits of previously made designs. I must sit at home to start on any new project, where I feel the most comfortable."



“You don't produce any better visuals just by sitting in a multi-million dollar studio. In the end, it's the quality of the work that matters”



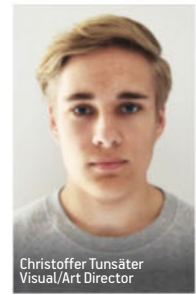
ABOUT THE STUDIO

KRIPPA DESIGN
www.krippadesign.com
[@krippadesign](https://twitter.com/krippadesign)

Krippa Studio is a clean, new and fresh digital design studio located in Kalmar, Sweden, working out of a small but perfectly equipped studio that is perfect for the services that it currently provides.



Arvid Rehn
Business Manager



Christoffer Tunsäter
Visual/Art Director

Team Krippa: The studio may be small, but it meets the needs of the duo that make up Krippa Design



Other than this, he uses a Nikon D3100 for photography as required, Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop, and Maxon Cinema 4D. Of course Photoshop has an important role to play in the creation of Krippa Design's work. "I use Photoshop in almost everything I do," says Christoffer. "It's a fantastic program. Even if I make a logotype in Illustrator, I often take this and make a design in Photoshop with it. It's a very complex program, but when you've learned the basics, everything else just falls in place. I'd say I use Photoshop about 65 per cent of the time."

These tools are used to create promotional materials for DJs and music acts around the world. Recently, Krippa was asked to create the graphic profile for the Weekend Festival 2015, Finland's biggest EDM festival. "It has been great working with the team and they're very easy to work with," says Christoffer. "We started [working with them] back in 2014 and made two T-shirt designs, but then in early 2015 we got the opportunity to make everything for them: logotype, flyers, website, merchandise, etc."

Much of the work that the studio designs has a distinct modern style: bright colours and cool

graphics. This is something that Christoffer tries to inject into client briefs, though it depends on how narrow that brief is: "I always try to make my own imprint on designs I'm making for clients, even if the restrictions are very tight. Though, [similarly] if the client doesn't give me any information at all, it can kill the creativity as much as if the client gives me a completely restrictive [brief]. If you are in a non-creative state of mind at that time and your client gives you no more than 'do something cool, bro', you sit there and don't know what to do to satisfy the client."



GRAPHIC PROFILE FOR WEEKEND FESTIVAL 2015

CHRISTOFFER WALKS US THROUGH THIS REDESIGN FOR THE 2015 WEEKEND FESTIVAL, FINLAND'S BIGGEST ELECTRONIC DANCE MUSIC FESTIVAL



01 | MAKING OF THE LOGOTYPE DESIGN
The first step was to create the logotype design. We got the basic logotype, but had to create the visuals around it. The theme for 2015 is Super Digital Edition, so we had to have that in mind while creating it.

02 | DESIGN THE FLYERS
We were now done with the logotype, so we already had the ground design, which all of these next steps have been based out of. They asked us to make the A3 and A5 flyers to be printed and hung up all around Finland.

03 | WEBSITE DESIGN
I didn't really code it as they already had a PSD layout for the website itself. I just had to create the design that was going to be displayed in the background, as shown in this step.



04 | ARTIST AND SOCIAL MEDIA BANNERS
About 50 artist banners and 10-20 different social media banners and miscellaneous designs [were] needed, and we also had a tight deadline for all of these. This included things for Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and other printable mini-flyers. This part took the most time to make.



05 | APPAREL AND MOBILE CASE DESIGNS
We made two T-shirt designs for the festival in 2014, which we also attended ourselves. But now we had to make it all; a bunch of different merchandise designs and mobile cases [were] needed.

In order to flex his creative muscles, Christoffer publishes a weekly design, which is published on the Krippa website and is available free to download as a wallpaper for desktop and mobile devices. "It all began with some leftover designs made for customers that they didn't like," he says. "I came up with the idea of sharing one non-commercial design each week. It's not leftover designs any more. Now I sit down, mostly on Sundays, which is the day they are released, and just flush my mind of all the inspiration I've gained over the past week. I have to say that I love to do these. I feel no pressure about [getting] anyone to like it or not. If I like it, it's done. They are often abstract, crazy and sometimes just very random."

In order to work effectively, the duo have very distinct roles at the studio. Arvid takes care of the business side of things, such as customer service, payments and making sure that the whole process runs as smoothly as possible. Christoffer is in control of the design side of things. He creates all of the artwork at Krippa, although they both brainstorm ideas for projects to come up with the best ideas. As such, they are both dependent on each other, because one could not work without the other. "We both have individual strengths that work well together," agrees Arvid. "My biggest strength is being very connected to the clients and coming up with

“It's a very complex program, but when you've learned the basics, everything else just falls in place. I'd say I use Photoshop about 65 per cent of the time”



Christoffer working: Christoffer starting on a new project for the DJ duo Nervo

new ideas to improve the company, while Christoffer is working. In my opinion Christoffer's biggest strengths are to deliver quality work and think outside the box." There are quite a lot of things that set this studio apart from many others, not least their small setup and young age, but Arvid thinks that it is this division of labour that makes them unique and what keeps them working so seamlessly: "I personally think we have a pretty unique way of cooperating together. Normal studios split up the work so that one person is taking care of the logos, one is designing cover art, etc. At Krippa we decided to split the work [so that] I am taking care of business-related stuff and Christoffer is taking care of everything that has to do with designing. This works surprisingly well and we will continue work this way as long as possible."

While the studio is enjoying a great deal of success at the moment and the dynamic is working well, Arvid and Christoffer are well aware of the other priorities in their life. In particular they are not going "all in" with the studio until they have finished school. But they do have big plans for expansion in the future: "After school [has finished] we will try to have this company going so well that we can work full time. Our dream is to open up a big office and even employ some workers too. We have got two more years at high school, so a lot can happen, but it is our plan for sure. We [didn't] think this hobby project that we started two years ago would turn out this well – we are just two normal guys who have a big passion for music and art. It feels like we don't have any limits so far that can stop us. We will just continue doing our thing and we're both very excited to see what the future has to offer." As are we.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF KRIPPA DESIGN

ARVID AND CHRISTOFFER WALK US THROUGH A TYPICAL DAY



09:00 MORNING ROUTINE

At 9am we arrive at the Krippa studio and start up a new fresh day with new challenging projects in our hands. Here we start by discussing today's schedule and get ready for the day.



11:00 KEEP UP THE WORK

Here we have started today's projects and are fully focused on the work. Working hard pays off.



13:00 COFFEE BREAK

Here's the moment we've been waiting for all morning: the coffee break! Now we sit down for a couple of minutes to speak about everyday stuff and just take it easy.

“We [didn’t] think this hobby project that we started two years ago would turn out this well – we are just two normal guys who have a big passion for music and art”



TOP 5 PRODUCTION TIPS

■ FILE MANAGEMENT

Keep a clean desktop, hard drive or whatever you are saving your files on. It is really important that you name and folder your files in an easy-to-find way!

■ KNOW YOUR SHORTCUTS

While working with Adobe software, or any other program, know the keyboard shortcuts for all tools you often use. It's so much easier and faster than to manually click on all of the tools.

■ COLOUR AND LAYOUT

Have in mind that a designer's eye is very different from a client's. Even though you like that crazy layout and those strong colours, the client probably doesn't. You need to try thinking [like the client].

■ EFFECTS AND BLENDING OPTIONS

Take some time to add more colour effects and play with the blending options for each layer to make the final design outstanding. I've turned completely horrible designs into something new and beautiful.

■ BE CRAZY

Sticking to the same techniques and effects doesn't impress your customers. Try to, once in a while, think of something new. A new plug-in, a new effect to use etc. A fresh mind is what the client wants.



14:00 | BOTH WORKING ON PROJECTS

After the break we are back at the work, keeping the focus up all day to get the best results possible.



16:00 | ARVID WORKING HARD

Arvid is now fully connected to the clients, discussing, contacting and receiving feedback from the customers.



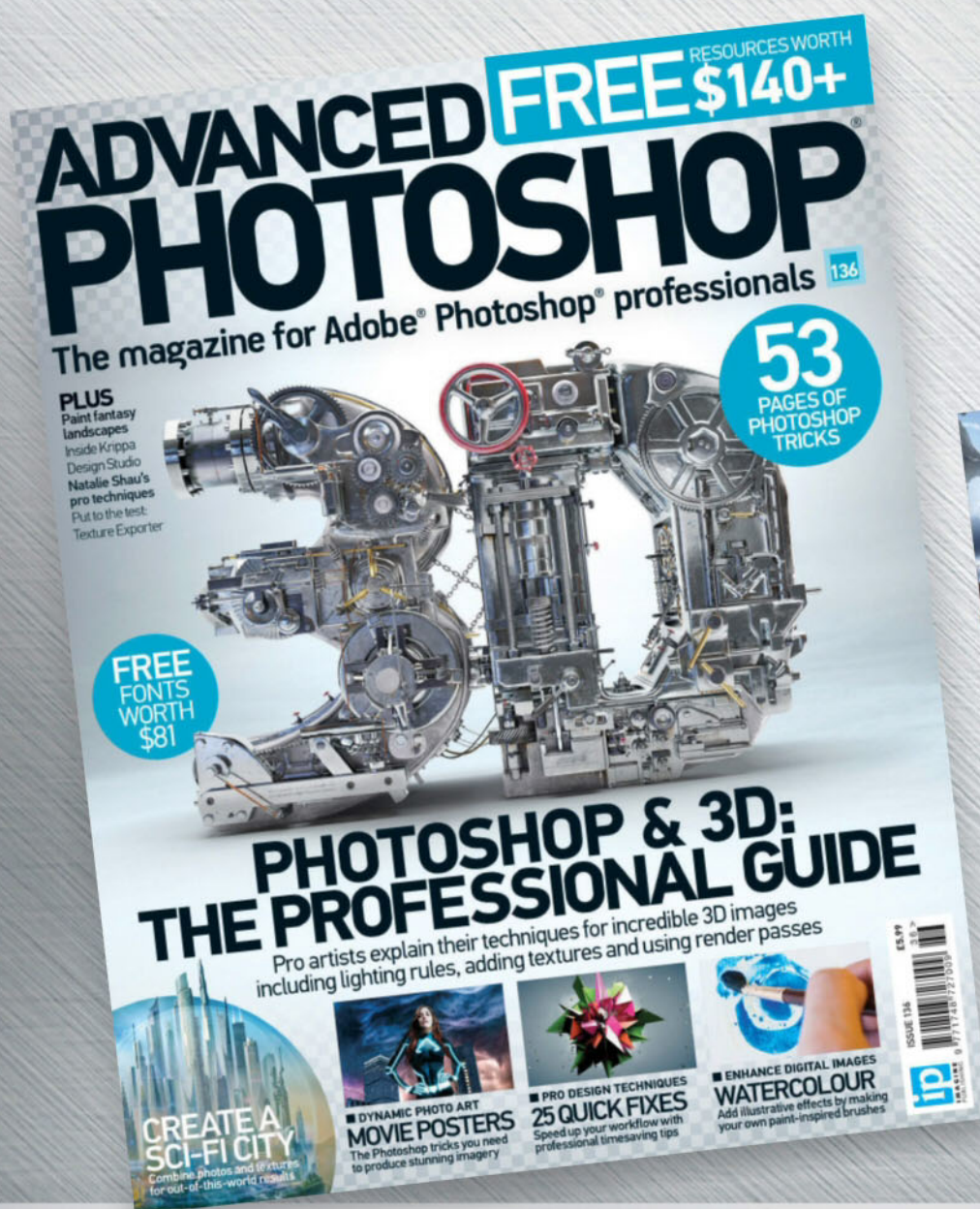
18:00 | DISCUSS THE DAY

Now the day is over, we sit down to discuss the day, its positive and negative things and what to improve. We also write the schedule for the coming day.

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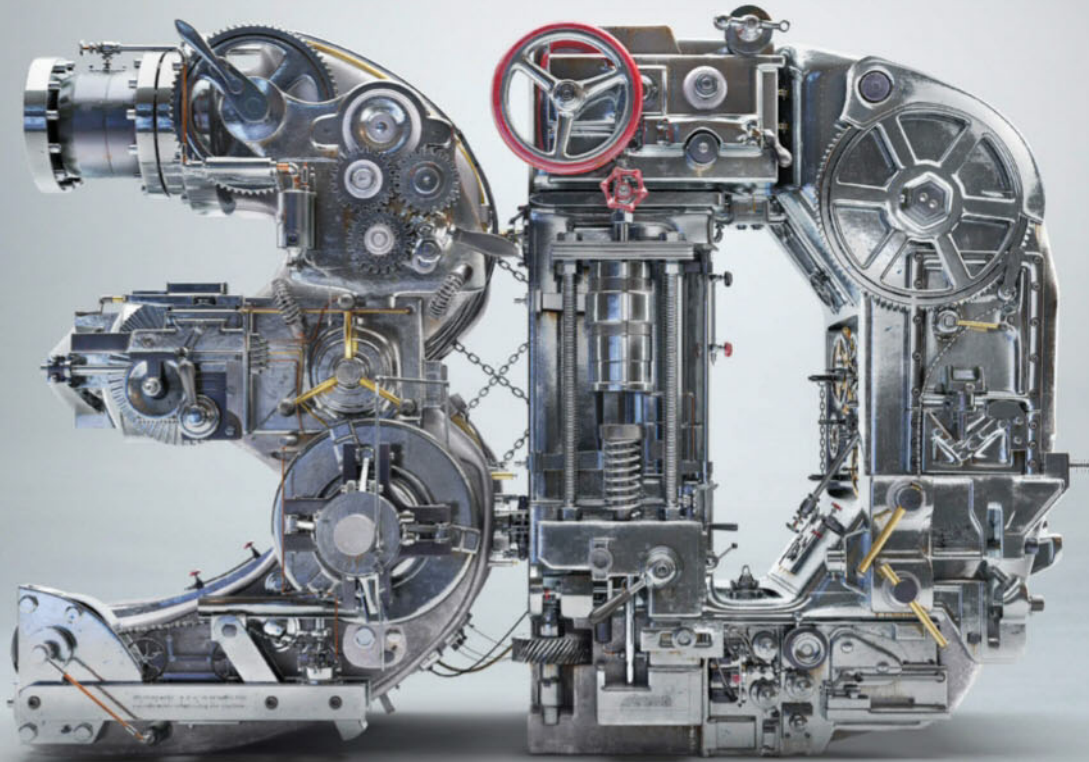
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3D & PHOTOSHOP: THE COMPLETE GUIDE

PHOTOSHOP NOW PACKS IN MORE 3D TOOLS THAN EVER BEFORE, AND PROFESSIONAL 3D ARTISTS ARE USING THE PROGRAM WITH INCREASING FREQUENCY. WE GET THEM TO SHARE THEIR TOP TIPS AND EXPERT ADVICE

Obviously, there are some artists for whom 3D and a dedicated 3D package is a must. Most likely, you can't work in movies or games without those skills. But there is an increasing band of artists for whom 3D is one arrow in their bow, one way they can provide the imagery their client – or heart – desires. And for these merry travellers, the fact that Photoshop can now open 3D files and has its own 3D workspace to edit these files in is a dream come true.

"Everything I do in 3D is to get the best possible base for the image by providing photorealistic materials and lighting, but Photoshop is where the magic happens, accentuating colours, contrast, point of attention for the viewer's eye and expressing an overall mood in the image," says Frédéric Müller (www.fredericmueller.ch), who works in Maya, Mudbox, HDR Lightstudio and Photoshop.

Cristian Koch (www.cristiankoch.de) is another artist who uses 3D almost all the time, due to the creative freedom it gives him. There's the "option of playing with the camera, this gives me new framing or light options which in traditional 2D would mean, take the photo again



© Andrei Lacatusu

or make another drawing, which I cannot find convenient in terms of production." In addition, he finds the "blend of art and engineering" that 3D offers exciting. "What made me go down the road of 3D was my lack of drawing skills," he admits, "and that I realised, that I have a good spatial ability... But what pushed me more was my passion for creating images and being able to sometimes 'bend the reality', and 3D opened that door."

So what 3D reality-bending can Photoshop accomplish? The first thing people tend to mention is its ability to extrude 3D type, but having a 3D workspace within the image editor does allow for more than that. You can create your own basic 3D shapes, you can edit ones you created elsewhere or models you've bought, and you can prep for 3D printing. This is why Koch says Photoshop's 3D workspace is "extremely useful, as it allows me to quickly draft without

PHOTOSHOP'S 3D INTERFACE

© Uli Staiger

3D print from here: Staiger is a designer rather than a producer, but he has experimented with 3D printing. "I loaded a 3D elephant into Photoshop and prepared it for the 3D print, which was done in less than five minutes. It worked perfectly!"

A bird's eye view: Toggle here to display Scene, Meshes, Materials or Lights. Remember that the 3D panels works in exactly the same way as the Layers panel. Toggle the eye on and off to see elements in the mix

Type right: Staiger says "Photoshop's 3D tools make it fairly easy to create metallic type which you can use for any kind of cover or poster. Pick a classic type, such as Dark11 or any roundhand font. Create a 3D Object of it."

How you see it: "Use the front camera in Orthographic mode. Give the front mesh a round extrusion. Pick a shiny, highly reflective material for the front and replace the standard IBL by a detailed photograph with a high dynamic," adds Staiger. Orthographic Cameras maintain parallel lines without convergence, and display the model in accurate scale view without perspective distortion.

much technical hassle, reducing everything to just purely creative process, I can play with basic 3D models or import models created in other 3D software, I can paint textures and create my basic layout without wasting time on technical hassles." He uses 3ds Max, ZBrush, After Effects and Fusion, as well as Photoshop, and says "What I find really interesting about this is that Photoshop relates very well with all of them, making my job easier, allowing me also, to effectively separate the creative process from the technical."

Michael Fawke, founder of architecture and interior design visualisation studio Plusform (www.plusform.co), adds that "Establishing a correct perspective and being able to add objects with reasonable shadow and light quality is a great feature for those that do not have a dedicated 3D application. For designers not looking to integrate 3D into their



© Frédéric Müller

workflow, just having that option built into Photoshop is a real plus." But while Photoshop's 3D offering may not be enough for artists like Fawke yet, one day it might be.

Juri Jablovkov (www.dekus.carbonmade.com), who recently finished his university thesis about Photoshop's 3D capabilities, says "Technology and software evolve and more efficient ways of getting results are developed. These days, with Photoshop, it is possible to texture your object directly on the surface in the 3D viewport, as opposed to traditional texture painting in 2D UV view... In Photoshop CC there is also a Live Painting feature that



allows you to have both the 3D and 2D view and both will update in real time as you paint or edit the texture." He wonders whether Photoshop will split in future, with one version with enhanced 3D capabilities, and one without.

Koch notes that with the increase of these constantly progressing and "emerging technologies such as OTOY (with the Octane render plug-in) that soon will allow Photoshop to make photorealistic renderings directly without leaving the application, this will open new possibilities for 3D illustrators to accomplish things that previously required to move to another software for rendering."



© Cristian Koch

ENHANCE 3D IN PHOTOSHOP

So, while Photoshop isn't replacing the dedicated 3D application – at least, not yet – it is bringing 3D more into an achievable world. And isn't that what matters most, when the goal of most good 3D work is to make itself seamless, realistic, even invisible.

"The best compliment a 3D artist can receive is the following question: 'Is this a photo?'" says Andrei Lacatusu (www.andreilacatusu.tumblr.com). "Most of us try to achieve realism, but that is no easy job. I did bad 3D as well but I hope I developed enough skill and experience to have passed that stage. From my experience, I think that the element that adds the biggest value in a 3D generated image is represented by shading. Without the proper material properties and textures, one cannot achieve the slightest amount of realism. After that, the light counts a lot, just as in photography, in order to enhance the image."

Matt Kohr (www.mattkohr.com and www.ctrlpaint.com) says that "achieving unity" is his goal. Sometimes he finds he's happy with a composition at the colour block in phase of painting 3D models he's imported, but "adding photos is always dangerous thing. Avoiding a noisy, gritty, mess is crucial so the last phase is where I balance the various elements ensuring my initial colour vision remains intact. Generally I'll use a combination of blurring, colour correction, and airbrushing to balance my image. There's no one-size-fits-all solution for this balancing phase, as every painting offers different challenges".

Mark Mayers (www.markmayers.co.uk) says he generally uses Photoshop for "postwork techniques to incorporate additional textures such as distress effects



© Mier Lee

ESSENTIAL LIGHTING RULES

MIER LEE REVEALS HIS APPROACH TO REALISTIC 3D LIGHTING

"I think the most important thing in 3D space is light," says Lee, "and we should know how the light works. Models would be looking completely different depending on where the light sources are, and what the colours are. In portrait painting for example, the first thing to do is to separate the light and dark in value, and warm and cool in colour. This works exactly the same in 3D software. I usually set up at least two different light sources. The first one is the key light (or main light), which is the first and usually the most important light that a photographer and cinematographer use in a lighting setup. This key

light controls the mood of your work. The other one is fill light. This is a secondary light source that may be used to reduce the contrast of a scene, or to change the colour of the shadow.

Photoshop is the most powerful tool that can control these two light sources. When using Photoshop, I always use adjustment layers such as Level, Curve, Gradient Map, Hue/Saturation and Color Balance. But my favorite one is Gradient Map. It allows you to easily change the colours of the light and shadow at the same time. And then I set it up as Overlay mode, and put some transparency on it."



© Uli Straiger

“The best compliment a 3D artist can receive is the following question: 'Is this a photo?' Most of us try to achieve realism, but that is no easy job”

ANDREI LACATUSU /
WWW.ANDREILACATUSU.TUMBLR.COM/

to 3D objects. I use various blending modes to make the object look as realistic as possible. I also use a non-destructive Dodge and Burn technique which is a 50% grey layer in Soft Light mode. This is painted at 20% Opacity with black and white to correct lighting. 'Sweet.tif' is a good example of this texturing/lighting method. 3d apps can also create multi-pass renders such as ambient light, Z Depth as well as compositing Alpha Channels for added realism."

For Kohr, making 3D look real, or "grounded" is "mainly a matter of correctly integrating it into the painting. Level of detail, film grain, lighting – all of these things will ruin the illusion if you simply add a photo without working it into the painting. Implied detail tends to work best in areas of the painting that



3D FILE TYPES COMPATIBLE WITH PHOTOSHOP

PHOTOSHOP CC OPENS MORE FILE TYPES THAN EVER BEFORE, THE LIST NOW INCLUDES THESE HANDY 3D OPTIONS

1. .3DS

Software: 3DS Max
Used for: Modelling

Having been around for donkey's years, .3ds has become the de facto file format when it comes to transferring or storing models. At the moment, Photoshop can import it, but not export.

2. .DAE

Software: Many, including Blender, Poser, SketchUp
Used for: Being an intermediate

A file format designed to allow people to transmit 3D data between programs, most applications can use COLLADA's open standard XML schema.

3. .OBJ

Software: Many, including Cinema 4D, Blender, Maya
Used for: 3D geometry

There's also a companion file format in .mtl that describes the material properties of the objects with an .obj file.

4. .JPS

Software: XnView, NVIDIA 3D Vision Photo Viewer
Used for: Stereoscopic images

The stereoscopic JPEG format can be used to create 3D effects from two 2D photos, or created by cameras that have two lenses.

5. .MPO

Software: MPO Explorer, Stereo Master
Used for: Stereoscopic images

The Multi Picture Object file is another format for storing and sharing stereoscopic images. Many programs can open them, but sometimes can only see one of the images.

6. .U3D

Software: Adobe Acrobat
Used for: Vertex-based geometry, lighting, textures

Universal 3D is a compressed file format designed to be compatible across a variety of applications, and to create 3D images for PDFs.

HOW TO ACHIEVE REALISM IN 3D

CRIS KOCH EXPLAINS HOW MAPPING AND LIGHTING CAN BRING YOUR IMAGE TOGETHER IN PHOTOSHOP



01 | A WORKFLOW OF YOUR OWN

Koch built this character in 3ds Max, and when he comes to import it into Photoshop, he has a checklist: "A) Make sure the uvw mapping is correct. B) Make sure the model is in the position 0 in the world (this will make your life easier later. C) Do a quick check in the normals of the model that are all facing outside."



02 | SET YOUR SCENE

"Import the 3D file going to 3D>New 3D layer from file, then you can line up the perspective of the 3D model to the background, once everything is lined up, double-clicking in the 3D layer will reveal all properties for the 3D scene, where we can adjust our textures, lights, cameras."



03 | ADD SOME REALISM

Now it's time for realism. "Once I am happy with the match of lights, depth of field and perspective," says Koch, "I render both layers and start retouching areas, and approaching the whole potential of Photoshop in compositing. As I come from a 3D background, I created reflection pass, occlusion pass, beauty pass to have more control over the whole image."

are not the focus." As you can see if you check out Kohr's tutorial, on FileSilo, about painting over his 3D car model, you'll see how he "draws the attention away from the shadowy undercarriage. The viewer probably won't scrutinise this area of the painting, so it's a great place to use implied detail. Implied detail tends to work better when seen from the corner of your eye. The focal point must be given much more attention."

Uli Staiger (www.dielichtgestalten.de) too is a fan of Photoshop overpainting, to avoid his 3D looking "too clean". For a recent composition of a long waterslide, he used "a stack of several patterns in a psd file and apply that carefully with a fuzzy, multi-jittered brush along the edges of the slide. Also, I use Photoshop's layer options, so that the painted dirt gets a 3D feeling. I enjoy Photoshop overpaintings very much and it is a lot more intuitive than a pure CGI production."

For Jablovkov, it's the different 3D and 2D views that makes Photoshop so good to use. "For example," he says, "you have an organic model like an alien gun or a character and you want to have a straight line on it. Maybe it's a tech line on the gun or war paint on the characters face. But your UV's are flattened so that there's minimal stretch and it can be difficult to judge where you need to make that specific line so that it



appears as a completely straight one in the model. Photoshop's 3D tool comes to the rescue here.

"You can work on your 2D flat texture just like any other day and when needed, pop up your 3D model and paint a bright red line where you want your detail to be. Then, continue in the 2D view to render it out precisely."

TEXTURING AND MAPPING

A fairly typical workflow might start with a sketch, go into a 3D app and then do the post work in Photoshop. Ifthikhar Abdul Nasser (www.ifthikhar.com) certainly does something along these lines, noting, "I then use textures as overlays and also to create specific environments in Photoshop to suit the mood/idea complementing the main render, transforming it into the way I intended to create in the first place. Other editing tasks like colour corrections, lighting, shadow/highlight, toning etc are also involved."

Mier Lee's (www.miershine.com) main 3D tool is Cinema 4D. He uses it to model "objects as basic structures for my work. If there is any texture that I need to put on, I edit it with Photoshop or Illustrator, and then I save it onto Cinema. Therefore, I always go back and forth during this process. Even though Cinema 4D renders models, lights, textures and colours for you, there are still a lot of things to be finished up with Photoshop after you render out all your frames. When I design style frames, I always use Photoshop to retouch colours, to edit textures and values, to exaggerate highlights and shadows, and to mix with 2D images and 3D renders to make them look more realistic."

Staiger often starts by building a background composition with Photoshop: "This will be used as a scene that carries the 3D content. It could be a carefully composed aerial shot from several photographs of clouds and landscapes. Then I place the already rendered 3D object onto that scene." He uses Cinema 4D to create his 3D, and Photoshop is used in various ways: "I take psd files as 3D textures. The good thing is that Cinema 4D supports the full range of Photoshop psd, even typo, patterns and correction layers. I can choose which layer I want to assign to which texture channel. Later in the process, I render in multipass mode. When I open the

THE POWER OF LIGHTING

JURI JABLOKOV SHOWS HOW ENVIRONMENT MAPPING POWERS UP LIGHTING



Juri Jablovkov worked on the sculpt of this fantasy axe in 3D-Coat to create the basic shape and detailing of the weapon

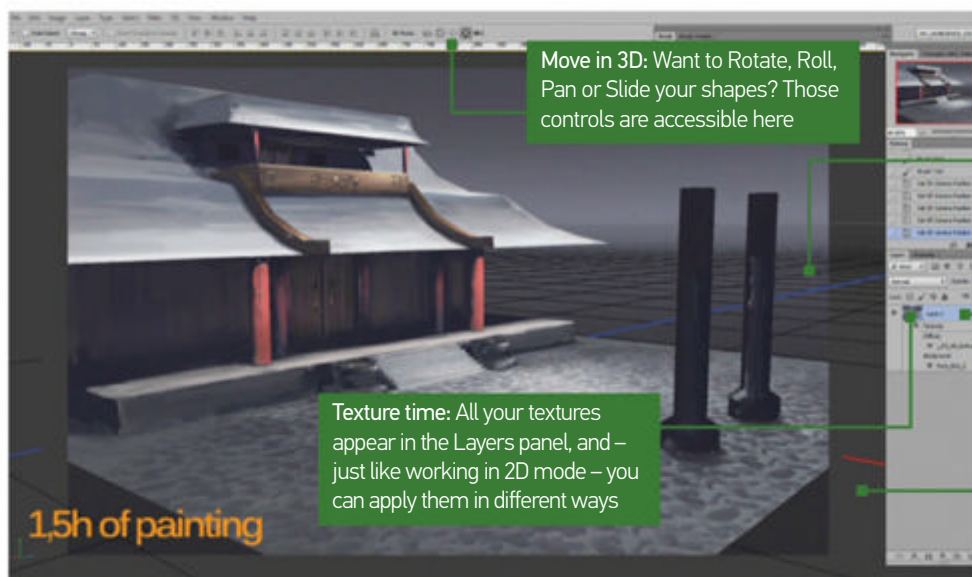


Then he brought it into Photoshop to map (maps used include Diffuse, Normal, Ambient Occlusion, Specular), texture and light



rendered file in Photoshop, all the lights, reflections, speculars and shadows are on separate layers and, very cool, all alpha channels are there already. Also, I use Photoshop for building a general overall look." Texturing and mapping are where Photoshop can

really shine. Müller explains the different techniques depending on the object: "I might have to map an existing texture onto the flat UVs (for example leather, wood, scratched metal images, etc) in Photoshop. In this stage, Photoshop is a very important tool since it



Move in 3D: Want to Rotate, Roll, Pan or Slide your shapes? Those controls are accessible here

Texture time: All your textures appear in the Layers panel, and – just like working in 2D mode – you can apply them in different ways

Line it up: Bringing your model into Photoshop and set the Surface Style to Line (from the 3D Scene menu) so you can line it up with the grid however you want, is the method that Juri Jablovkov recommends

Paint it: Now you can paint. "Switch between 3D and 2D views in difficult areas and remember to make new layers according to your needs," says Jablovkov

Make a matte: Later on you can fill this part of the image with a background painting. It's probably best not to do this straightaway, because you might decide to change your camera angle



HOW TO ADD A TEXTURE

JURI JABLOKOV EXPLAINS HOW TO ADD AND FIX TEXTURES IN PHOTOSHOP



01 | OPEN THE 3D RENDER

First, open up your 3D render. Then "bring a photograph into a new layer above the 3D layer and merge it down to project using Ctrl-E key combination. This projects the photo onto the 3D model taking in account the maximum projection angle that you have set in the 3D menu."



02 | USE LAYER MASKS

It won't fit perfectly, so zoom in close and see how the texture is applying. To fix any problem areas, simply use Layer Masks. "Always be sure of what layer you are painting on," warns Jablovkov. "You cannot see the layer name if you have only the 3D window open."



03 | ADD BACKGROUND AND TEXTURE

Jablokov's workflow often involves putting a "gradient background into the Environment menu's background slot and set it to panorama mode so I would have some background to relate the colours to." This is a Photoshop render, but sometimes he exports back to Blender and renders from there. Finally, add background texture.

helps me to extract several map types out of the textures I use for the diffuse colour. I can easily manipulate them with Curves to get a reflectivity map, or extract the very fine detail by applying a High Pass filter in order to get a detailed bump map." Using Photoshop's 3D tools Koch paints textures using and says "I find the distortion tools great for adjusting textures accurately to the model UVWS, creating all the necessary texture channels (Diffuse, Specular, Bump, etc.) and grouping them into folders gives me a non-destructive workflow that allows me to make

quick and clean corrections. The save to layers script is great to be able to export my layers without collapsing them, giving me the option to come back to Photoshop for fixes."

But it isn't just what Photoshop can do that makes it vital to the 3D artist's workflow. Koch says he uses Photoshop "also as an excuse to be able to exit the Operator mode and be able to see in a more critical point of view, add comments, make some fast retouches with Photoshop using other pictures, allowing me to see my composition as a whole."

WHERE TO FIND FREE 3D ASSETS TO USE IN PHOTOSHOP

SKIP HOURS OF MODELLING AND DOWNLOAD THE MANY FREE 3D MODELS THE INTERNET HAS TO OFFER (JUST MAKE SURE YOU OPT FOR A PHOTOSHOP-FRIENDLY FORMAT)



1. TURBOSQUID

www.turbosquid.com

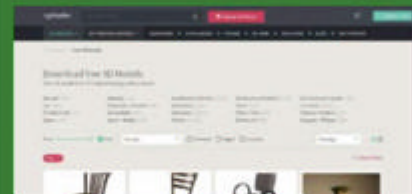
TurboSquid is probably the most famous collection of 3D models on the internet, and they're used in games, illustration, visual effects and much more. Many of the models are for sale, but there are lots of free treats to browse through too.



2. TF3DM

www.tf3dm.com

A source of textures and tutorials as well as models, TF3DM is updated regularly, meaning that there's always something new to have a look at. Again, it also has models that can be purchased.



3. CG TRADER

www.cgtrader.com

With categories like cars and food, there's a good chance you can find what you need for free on this website. There's also a forum, a blog and a gallery to keep you sticking around.



4. ARTIST-3D.COM

www.artist-3d.com

It's .obj and .3ds files that dominate this 3D model site, and it's got plenty of categories, including people, vehicles and military items.

3D TECHNIQUES IN PHOTOSHOP CC

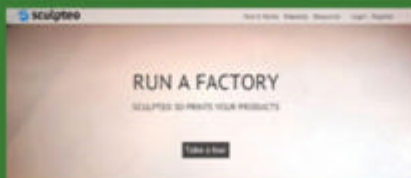
3D PRINTING SERVICES VIA PHOTOSHOP CC

NO 3D PRINTER? GET YOUR 3D DESIGNS PRINTED VIA THE CLOUD



1. SHAPEWAYS www.shapeways.com

One of the first players in the 3D printing game, Shapeways also has a marketplace so you can sell the jewellery, toys or art that you have designed. You can pick from plastics, metals and ceramics to print with.



2. SCULPTEO www.sculpteo.com/en/

Sculpteo too has a marketplace where you can sell your 3D printed products. There are different design guidelines, depending on what material you want to print with, but the site has plenty of information to make sure your models pass muster.



3. IMATERIALIZE www.imaterialize.com

An online 3D printing service for anyone with an eye for design. You can turn your ideas into 3D printed reality. Then share it with the online community.



4. MAKERBOT www.makerbot.com

The MakerBot 3D Printed Products service allows you to order from as few as 50 units of your design, or, alternatively, you could splash out on a MakerBot Replicator and print as many or as need as you need.

Not everyone has the time, money, or inclination to master 3D modelling. And if you want to be able to import 3D models into your own work but also be able to manipulate them sufficiently so they feel like they're yours, well, Photoshop CC can do that. Mayers thinks this is a great way of working: "It's a bit like using stock photos because someone else has already done all the hard work in creating the model. I used this method of importing several models in my piece Future City. The imported models were used in a way not originally intended to create the buildings. Many 3D models come supplied with Photoshop textures or bump maps; if not you can use an app called UVMapper which enables you to create texture maps based on the object's UV coordinates. Photoshop also allows you to modify or update your textures on 3D models in real-time, which is a great feature."

According to Koch, another "interesting trick is to use basic 3D objects for retouching complex photos, aligning objects in perspective and using them to generate depth maps to give depth of field effects or volumetric depth fog, these layers will be rasterized

and then deformed to fit precisely with the picture. This trick is extremely interesting for texturing photos too! giving some dirt on walls or even a adding details like dirt, mud, rust to a car for example, it could have many more applications, it is just a matter of experimenting with it, I find this technique super interesting to give final details for the finishing process."

Because no matter how good a model you've built, or how expensive a model you've bought, the finished result can still look lifeless if you can't wrangle Photoshop properly. Fawke notes: "It is your job as an artist to be creative in bringing the image to life. Photoshop has a wealth of adjustment control to help transform your 3D renders (produced in or out of Photoshop). Try new things, experiment with adjustment layers, add colour, change blending modes, use your masks. Emphasise your lights and shadows. The biggest tip I can offer is to always look at reference material. Materials and light react differently than you may think. Look at the contours of edges, study reflections, then tweak settings, play around and try to replicate what you see."



© Cris Koch



© Andrei Lacatusu



© Matt Kohr



© Michael Fawke

“It is your job as an artist to be creative in bringing the image to life. Photoshop has a wealth of adjustment control to help transform your 3D renders (produced in or out of Photoshop)”

MICHAEL FAWKE WWW.PLUSFORM.CO



© Uli Staiger

IS 3D THE FUTURE OF PHOTOSHOP?



© Ifthikhar abdul nasser

THE FIREFLY COTTAGE BY IFTHIKHAR ABDUL NASSER

IFTHIKHAR ABDUL NASSER EXPLAINS HOW HE TURNED DAY INTO NIGHT WITH PHOTOSHOP

"I once had a dream of millions of fireflies or lightning-bugs, lighting up all around my house," says Nasser. "I fancied them to be stars that took life and came down from the skies spreading all around my home. Here I tried to re-create the same dream in 3D and Photoshop." As a challenge to polish his Photoshop skills, he rendered a day scene in 3ds Max and then converted it to night within Photoshop. For lighting, he uses different brushes, mostly default and some custom ones of his own making.

His lighting workflow depends "on 'render elements' (like lighting pass, ID pass, reflection/refraction pass) that are generated along with the main render for effectively controlling various aspects like controlling lighting in the renders, including independent light contribution from each light source (specifically in interiors), global illumination in the scene, reflection and refraction on glass elements, shadow passes allow fine shadow control, using the various overlay options in Photoshop." Photoshop allowed him to select

the individual objects in the render easily, and it could work on them individually to enhance the whole scene.

Nasser also textures and creates environments in Photoshop, but setting himself the challenge of turning day into night using only Photoshop shows how powerful it can be. He says he uses the program to "create that extra fine lighting for my render, which gives the final touch or sometimes making up for even serious errors made if any in 3D. So I guess it helps to a good extent."



© Matt Kohr



© Mark Meyers

Many artists are wondering if Adobe will further develop Photoshop's 3D capabilities. Müller notes, that "For instance, if you need very high resolution textures, you split the UVs of your 3D model over several UV Tiles (so you would have for example, four UV tiles instead of just one). Photoshop does not seem to be able to cope with that, it only knows 1 UV tile, so if you paint on your model it will paint the same stroke over all your UV tiles... I am very curious how Adobe will continue to develop the 3D Tools in Photoshop and will be watching closely to any changes that would make it more suitable for my purposes." With more and more people experimenting with 3D printing, that's certainly one direction Photoshop is heading in. "The most important trend is related to the new technologies that are improving as we speak," says Lacatusu. "And I am talking about 3D scanning and 3D printing. These processes are great because they actually create a palpable connection between reality and the virtual world."

Again, it's all about being real, or realistic anyway. "To be effective," Lacatusu adds, "you should know very well when enough is enough. If there is not that much time you can stop adding too much detail directly from 3D, and add it instead in Photoshop. Some details can take a very long time to make in 3D, but can be very easily implemented in Photoshop, and with much more control."

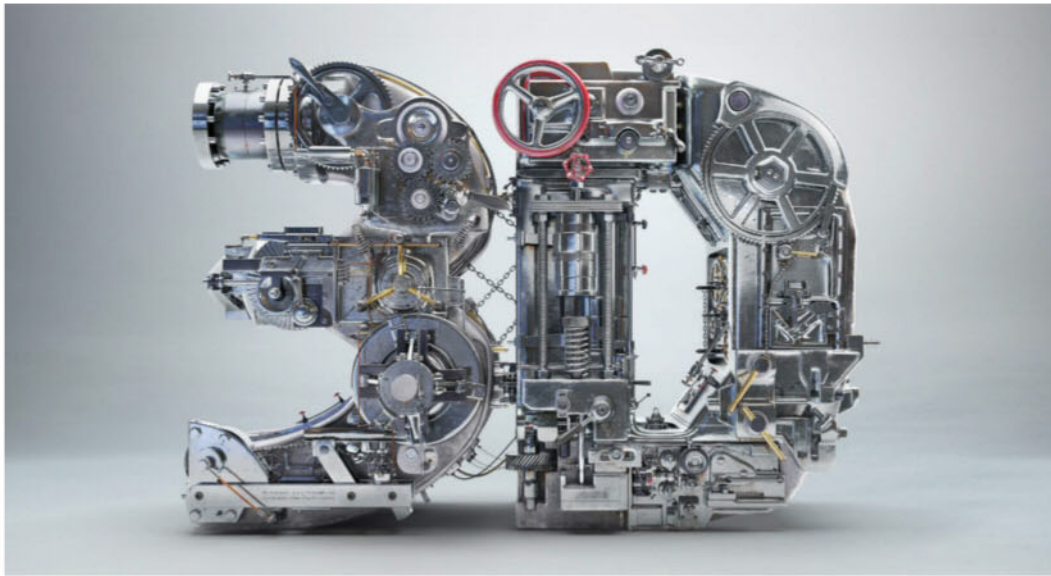
Ultimately, 3D is a great tool, but as Kohr notes, "only when used carefully. It works best in service of your painting skills not as a crutch to avoid drawing in the first place. I've spent many years learning to draw linear perspective, and to paint lighting. This is an essential foundation. But if you're willing to put in the time to learn proper 3D software, you'll undoubtedly be happy you did."



© MarkWaters



© Matt Kohr



OUR EXPERT

ANDREI LACATUSU
andreilacatusu.tumblr.com

Andrei Lacatusu is a self-taught graphic artist, living in Bucharest, Romania. He specialises in 3D graphics and currently works as lead CGI artist at Carioca Studio, in Bucharest.

SOURCE FILES

All the files used in this tutorial are available on FileSilo, including the 32-bit raw render, the render passes and the background photo. The textures can be downloaded free from CGTextures.com (DecalLeakingRusty0002_1_M and MetalScratches0079_4_L).

MASTER 3D POST-PRODUCTION

■ BEGIN COMPOSITING AND POST-PRODUCTION

READY YOUR FILES TO START ENHANCING YOUR 3D RENDER

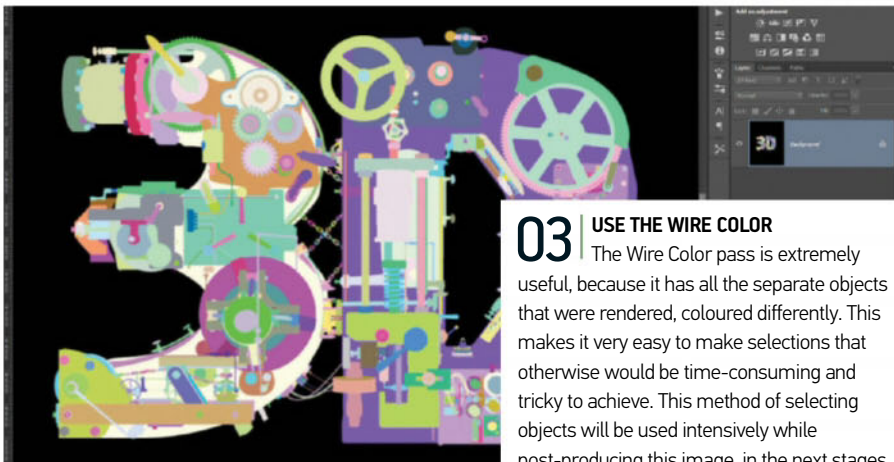
01 | PLAN THE WORKFLOW

Having completed the render, it is now time for compositing and post-production. It is always essential to know how much you can get directly from 3D and how much can you add later, and in this case, the plan is to change the background and enhance the image with the render passes, and add some more detail by using textures in Photoshop.



02 | OVERVIEW THE FILES

This render was completed in Autodesk's 3ds Max using the V-Ray render engine, but almost all 3D software offers you the possibility to render several passes, or render elements as they are called in V-Ray, in order to help during your post-production process. In this case, the documents consist of the main render, Alpha channel, Reflection, Specular, Raw Total Lighting, Wire Color and Normals.



03 | USE THE WIRE COLOR

The Wire Color pass is extremely useful, because it has all the separate objects that were rendered, coloured differently. This makes it very easy to make selections that otherwise would be time-consuming and tricky to achieve. This method of selecting objects will be used intensively while post-producing this image, in the next stages.

■ WORK IN PROGRESS

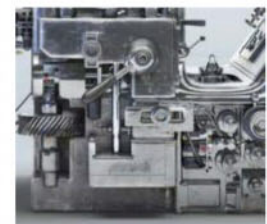
FROM RAW RENDER TO FINISH



Progress 1: Have all your files ready



Progress 2: Create advanced masks



Progress 3: Add texture detail

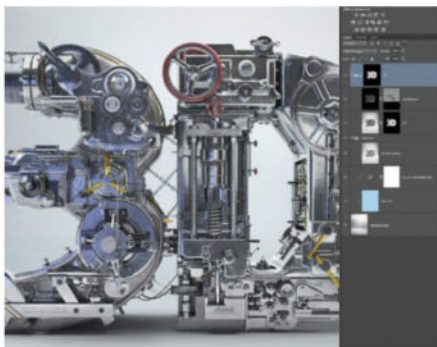


04 | USE THE ALPHA CHANNEL

The Alpha Channel is a black-and-white render pass, which allows us to create precise masking for our main object. Add the 3D raw render layer to a group, in this case called 3D. Then load the Alpha Channel in the document above all layers, go to the Channels tab and Cmd/Ctrl+left-click on the RGB Channel in order to make a selection. Go to the group layer and click on Add Layer Mask. It is better to have the main image in a masked group, because all the following layers that will affect the 3D render will automatically be masked.

■ QUICK TIP

You should always know what your limits are and how to achieve the best result in the most efficient way. In this project, a lot of time was saved by adding detail and illumination in Photoshop instead of trying to do it in 3D software.



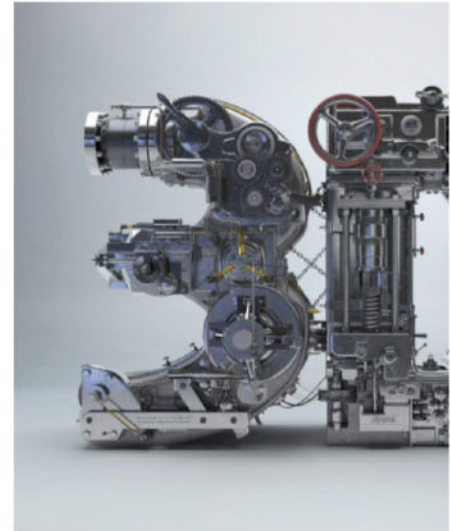
07 | USE THE REFLECTION PASS

The Reflection pass is widely used in post-production, and it can make your image really pop out. Add the Reflection image to your document, in the 3D group, and choose Color Dodge as the blending mode. Screen mode is often used for this stage, but in this case it washed out the image a bit, while Color Dodge brought more contrast. The image now is overly bright, so you have to mask the Reflection layer and fill the mask with 50% Gray. Select the mask and go to Edit>Fill and choose 50% Gray. Now you can paint the mask with black where you think you need less reflection and with white where you think it's better to intensify it.



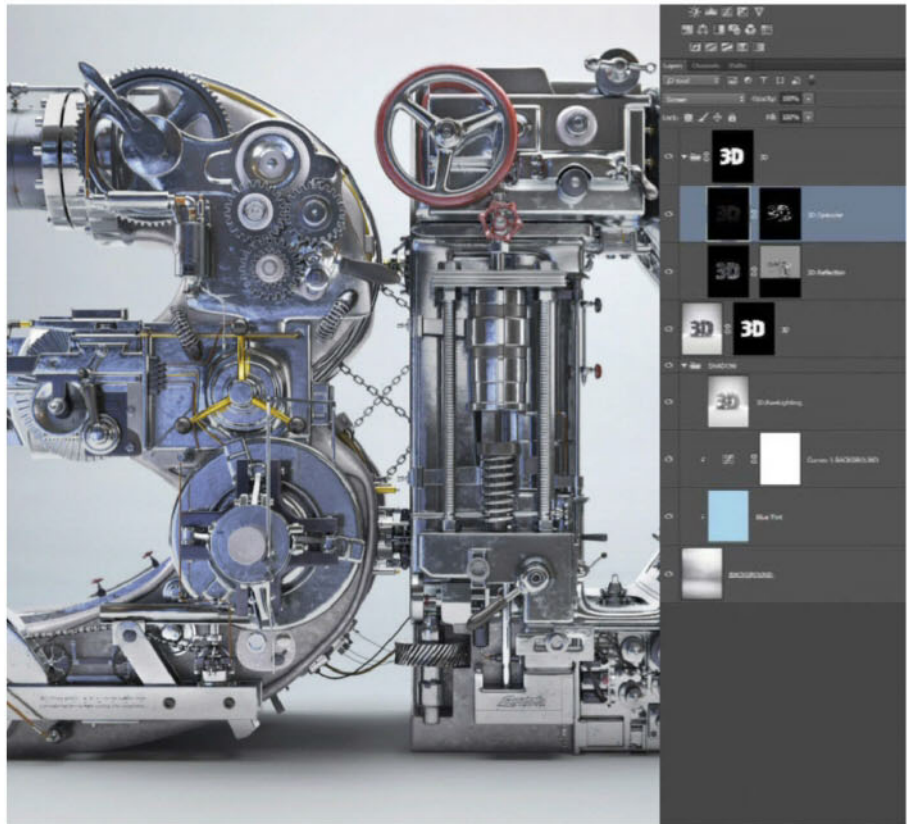
05 | ADD A NEW BACKGROUND

To have more detail on the background, it is better to replace it with a real photo. The difference won't be striking, but the eye will perceive it as being realistic. Place the background image as a bottom layer, and tweak the layer by adding a Curves adjustment layer, in order to integrate it with the 3D mechanical type. The image seems to be a little bit desaturated all over, so add a new layer between the background and the Curves adjustment, filled with a light blue and set at low opacity and with Color as the blending mode.



06 | ADD SHADOWS

The mask is also covering the shadows underneath the main object. 3D software allows you to render passes that contain just the shadows, but in this case the best choice is the Raw Total Lighting image. Add this to the document, above the background and under the 3D group, and choose the Multiply blending mode.



08 | ADD THE SPECULAR PASS

The Specular pass is a representation of specular highlights on the rendered surfaces. Similar to the Reflection pass, you can use it to bring out more some highlights of your rendered

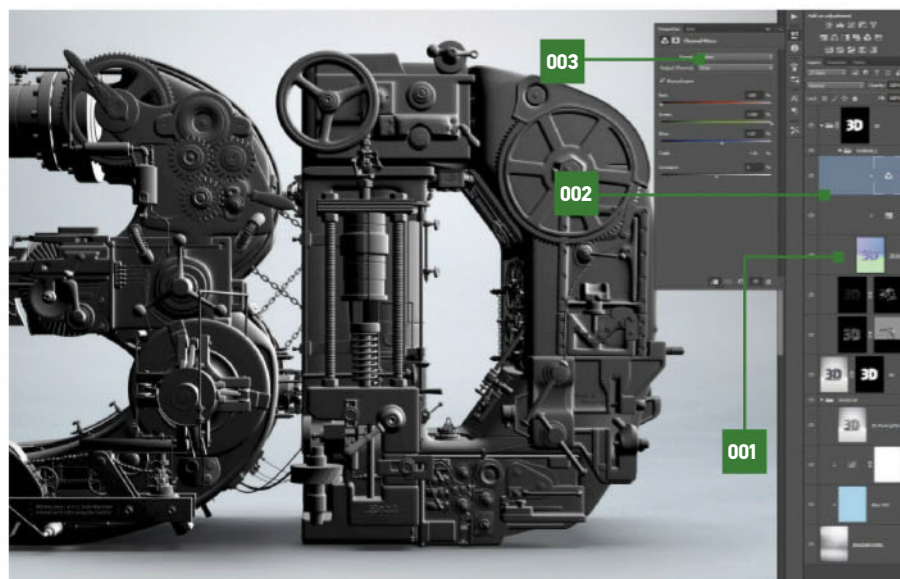
object. You need to blend this layer by using the Screen mode, which is most suitable in this case. But on other projects be sure to check more blending modes from the Lighten category, some might work better than others.

EASILY CREATE ILLUMINATION MASKS

BRIGHTEN AND DARKEN PARTS OF YOUR IMAGE BY USING THE NORMALS PASS

09 | USE THE NORMALS PASS

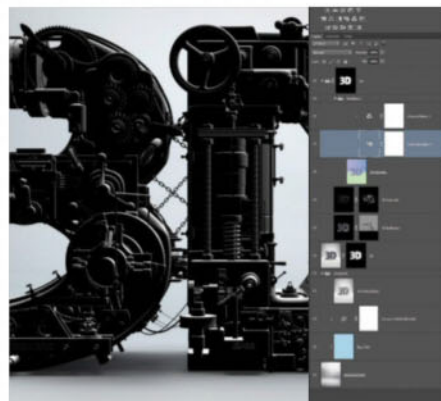
This render element is a 2D representation of the 3D objects, based on the normal angle of the camera. The image is made up of tones of red, blue and green, which represent the axes of the tri-dimensional space (x,y and z). Although often ignored, it can be used to easily create masks, being based on RGB values,



001 | PLACE THE NORMALS PASS
Place it as the top layer in the 3D group. We will make masks with it, so it is better to sit at the top so it is easy to access throughout the rest of the process

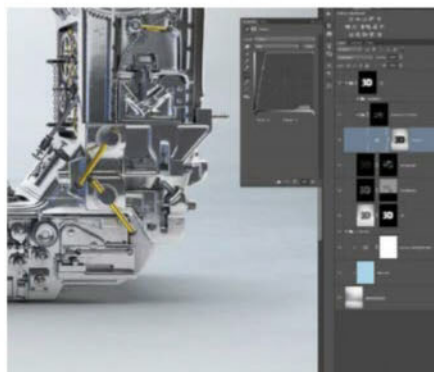
002 | ADD ADJUSTMENT LAYERS
Link a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer to the Normals pass, and also add and link a Channel Mixer adjustment layer above it

003 | ADJUST THE CHANNEL MIXER
Set the Channel Mixer on Monochromatic and reduce the Red value to the minimum, and then raise the Green value to the maximum



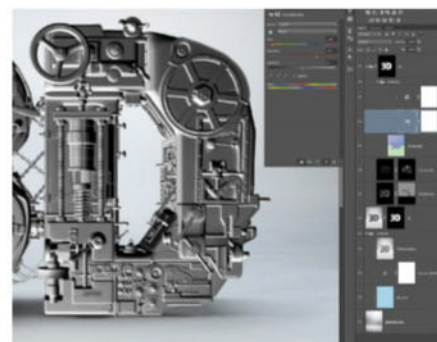
11 | OBTAIN THE DESIRED MASK

The image needs more light coming from above, and instead of going back to the 3D scene, making tests, rendering again and losing several hours, you can use this technique, and have an undestructive and controllable tool at your disposal. In order to obtain the desired mask, play with the Hue/Saturation options – the values that work best are +30 for Hue, +100 for Saturation and -30 for Lightness. You can see how the surfaces that face up are all covered in white, while the rest of the image is black, which means we can use this result to illuminate from above.



12 | PUT THE MASK TO GOOD USE

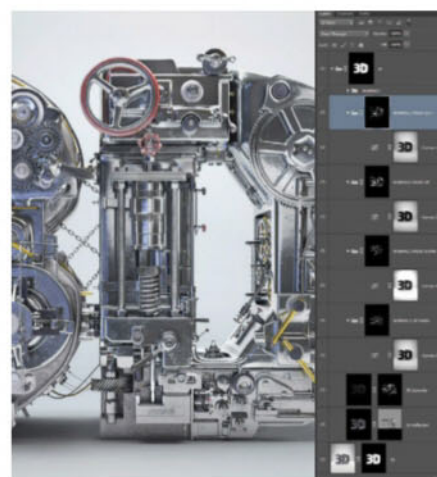
Go to the Channels tab, and click while you hold Cmd/Ctrl pressed on the RGB Channel to select the white parts of the image. Go back to the layers, deactivate the Normals layer, and add a Curves adjustment layer while you still have the selection active. Pull the curve up to the maximum, and you can see how the object gets brightened just as it was intended. The image looks overexposed in some areas, and also some regions might be better off without the Curves adjustment. Therefore, group the Curves adjustment layer and add a layer mask to the group. Invert the mask and paint with the brush only where you want the adjustment to affect the image.



10 | CREATE MASKS WITH THE NORMALS PASS

The Channel Mixer already offers a greyscale mask, but in order to have full control of this technique, you have to use the Hue/Saturation adjustment layer. As you move the Hue slider, the image changes, just like if there is a light source that moves around the object. Also, both the Saturation and the Lightness sliders can be used in order to play with the contrast of the mask. This technique is extremely efficient, because you can rapidly create masks to act from whichever direction upon the rendered object.

“Always group your adjustment layer, and add a layer mask to the group to paint over it, so that you can have maximum control over your work”



13 | REPEAT THE PROCESS

You can always reactivate the Normals layer and tweak the Hue/Saturation settings until you get other useful masks. You can direct your curves to affect surfaces from every side you wish, and you can also darken areas, not only brighten them. Always group your adjustment layer, and add a layer mask to the group to paint over it, so that you can have maximum control over your work.

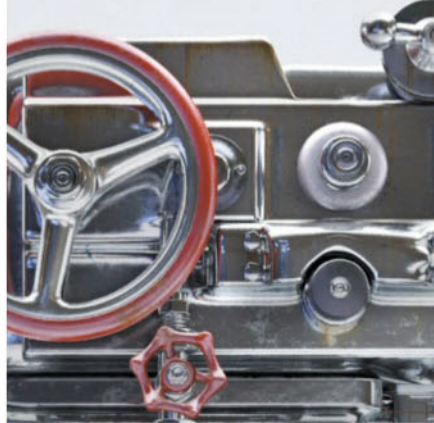
ADD DETAILS WITH TEXTURES

BLEND TEXTURES OF RUST, GRUNGE AND SCRATCHES TO BRING REALISM



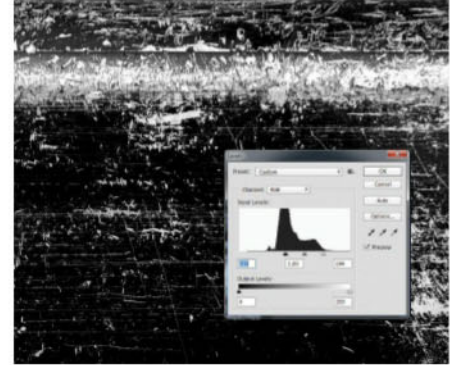
14 FIND THE SUITABLE TEXTURES

The image has some detail of extensively used and grungy metal, but it lacks some logic in its wear. To achieve that feeling, the best way is to add some rust leaks, some edge wear and scratches. To do this directly from 3D would consume a lot of time. Besides that, adding this sort of detail in Photoshop has the advantage that it is not destructive and it is easy to control. A great source for textures is CGTextures.com, a website that offers a wide array of images, which can be accessed for free. We downloaded a PNG decal of rust leaking, which has enough variation and information to be used all over the image.



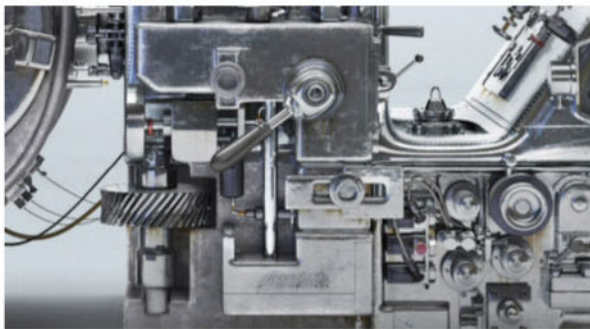
15 ADD RUST LEAKS

Before starting to add the leaks, you should identify the best spots to add them: under objects, at joints between objects, at the top part of some objects. After placing the texture, you should use the Wire Color pass, and select with the Magic Wand the object you wish the texture to be applied to. Mask the texture with this selection and paint with black on the mask covering parts of the rust leaks. Repeat this process until you cover all the places you think there should be leaks.



16 PREPARE THE TEXTURE

For this process, I downloaded another texture from CGTextures.com. This image is suitable because it contains both a grungy worn edge and also some scratches. Now the image is coloured and cannot be blended, so you should desaturate the texture and add contrast to it. In order to do this fast, while you have the texture layer selected, press Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+U to desaturate the image, and then Cmd/Ctrl+L to bring up the Levels adjustment. Now pull the white and black Input Levels sliders closer to the centre, until you have quite a contrasted texture to use.



17 ADD EDGE WEAR AND SCRATCHES

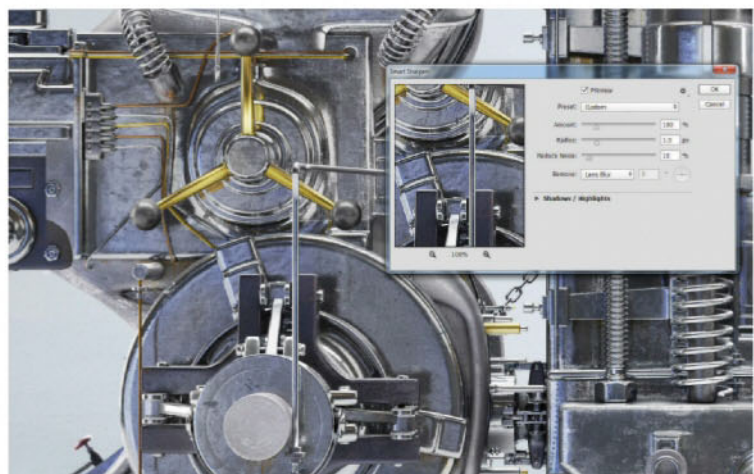
The texture is ready to be blended, but you should first make a plan and think where this effect should appear: on the edges, at some joints, and the scratched part on some plain surfaces that lack detail. Place the texture where you think it suits best, and choose Multiply as blending mode. Make a selection by using the Magic Wand and the Wire —, and add a layer mask to the texture layer. Now you can paint with black on the mask and keep only what you think is necessary to look good. Repeat the process and apply the texture wherever it suits the purpose.

■ RENDER PASSES

This tutorial explains some techniques and the use of some render passes in order to enhance your rendered image. These techniques, though, might not work in the same way on every project, and could need some more tweaking. There are also some more render passes that can help you in post-production, to add depth of field, fog and other effects, that can also enhance your images.

■ QUICK TIP

Keep a balanced eye and don't over-edit your image. Especially in CGI post-production where you have all these helpful rendered layers, you might be inclined to add and blend layers too much. Always play with opacity, mask your layers and keep things as natural-looking as possible.



18 SHARPEN AND SAVE

The image is almost finished, and it looks much better than the raw render. Before saving, it is better to sharpen the image a bit, especially if the image is made for print. Flatten the image, by going to Layers>Flatten Image, and then go to Filter>Sharpen>Smart Sharpen and choose some small but effective values, like 100% for the Amount and 1.5 for the Radius. Now the image is ready, so you only have to save your image and enjoy your finished work!





ALTERNATE ENDING

MATHEUS LOPES

DISCOVER THE PROCESS BEHIND THIS BRIGHT, BOLD ILLUSTRATION PROJECT

Brazilian artist, illustrator and art director Matheus Lopes (www.mathiole.com) created this award-winning design for a competition on Threadless. He's been interested in design for a while – "I've been working [on] and learning design and illustration since I was 14, when I entered a comic drawing course. I quickly fell in

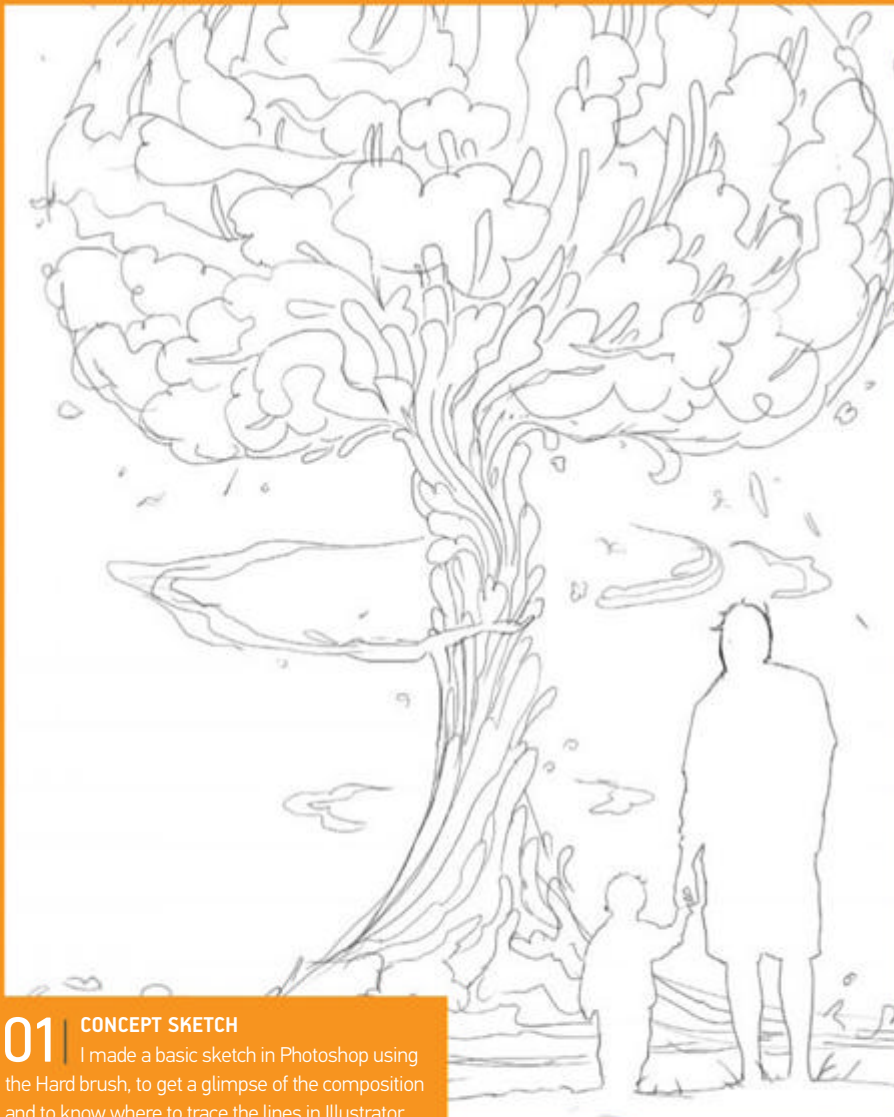
love with the art industry and decided to bet all my coins into it. When I was at college, graduating as a graphic designer, I started developing t-shirt designs for many companies. It worked so well for me that I've been in this field ever since."

The idea behind *Alternate Ending* was "how different the world – and especially Japan –

would be if the Hiroshima bomb had never fell upon them, or if the bomb was simply an explosion of colours, that brings joy instead of destruction".

To create this colourful image, Lopes combined Illustrator with Photoshop, and used clipping masks to add the hand-drawn look that characterises much of his work.

“When I was at college... I started developing t-shirt designs for many companies. It worked so well for me that I've been in this field ever since”



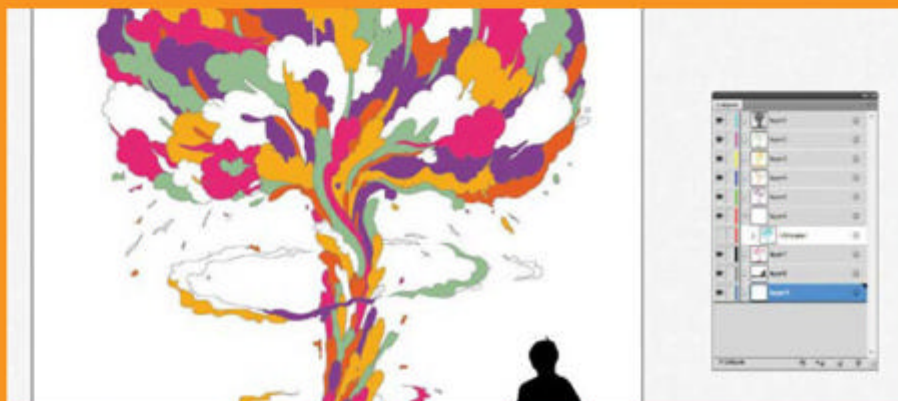
01 | CONCEPT SKETCH
I made a basic sketch in Photoshop using the Hard brush, to get a glimpse of the composition and to know where to trace the lines in Illustrator.



02 | DRAW THE LINES
I imported the sketch to Illustrator, changed its Opacity to 30%, locked the layer and started drawing the lines using both the Pen tool and the Brush tool.

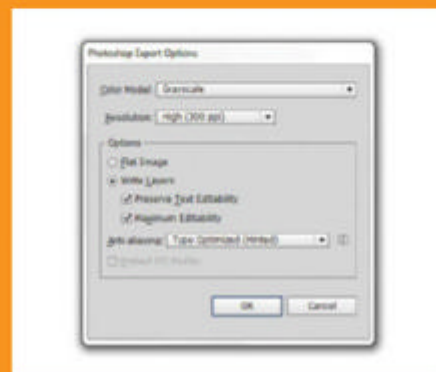


03 | ADD SOME COLOUR
With the lines done, it's time to colour the shapes formed by the lines. Select all, hit K for the Live Paint tool, and simply click on the areas. I don't worry about the combination of colours now, I'll be able to change this later in Photoshop.



04 GROUP THE COLOURS

I decompose the layer where I used Live Paint, ungrouped it twice, deleted (or hid) the lines, and started grouping (Cmd/Ctrl+G) shapes with the same colour, and put each group on a different layer.



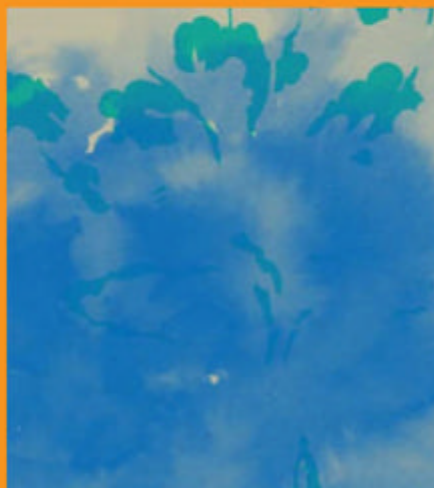
05 EXPORT TO PHOTOSHOP

Now I go to File>Export>Photoshop and choose either CMYK or grayscale, 300 dpi, mark Write Layers with all boxes checked and hit OK.

CLIPPING MASKS

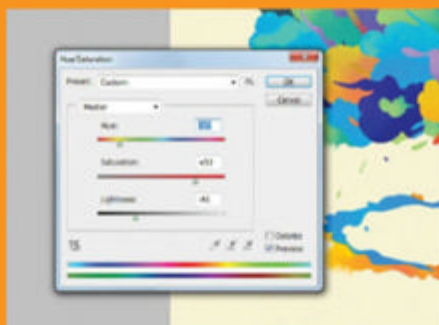
A POWERFUL WAY TO ADD COLOUR AND TEXTURE

Clipping masks are a great way to add colour and texture and they give you full control of where they show up. Clipping masks literally clip to the layer below them, following the shape of it. Try applying a clipping mask over a big brushstroke for a really creative effect.



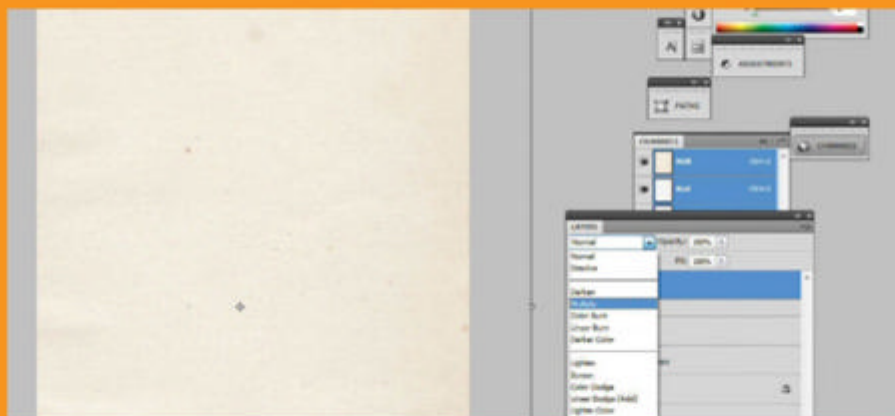
06 USE THE CLIPPING MASK

Once the file is in Photoshop, each group of colours is on a different layer. I imported a custom watercolour texture into the file, put the texture above the layer, held Alt and waited for the icon to appear. I click and the texture will be clipped in the shape of the layer below. I repeat the process with the other layers until they're all filled with the textures.



07 MORE COLOURS

I start playing around with colours in many ways. The way I like most is selecting a layer and hitting Cmd/Ctrl+U to go to Hue/Saturation. I change values without too much thinking, this phase is experimental and will make you go back and forth until you find the right tones.



08 ADD THE DETAILS

Once everything is done, I add some details to enhance the image. On this one I added a paper texture by simply putting it above all layers and changing the blending mode to Multiply. I also added a splatter texture below all layers and that's it!

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CREATE A DISPLACEMENT EFFECT

BREAK DOWN AND RECONFIGURE A PORTRAIT USING SHAPE LAYERS, MASKS, AND LAYER STYLES

The artwork for Adobe Creative Suite 6 features stunning portraits flavoured with the technology and culture behind the associated program. Illustrator shows a woman festooned with beautiful vector doodles. The artwork for Photoshop, by Alberto Seveso, portrays a face broken down and re-imagined using organic shapes, elements, and texture. It's a prime example of how Photoshop can help you produce complex visuals with a layered approach.

Let's try creating something in the vein of this image. We'll start by using the Pen tool to layout shape layers and adorn them with layer styles. This tutorial assumes you have Pen tool basics down.

After compiling a decent array of shapes, we'll extract our model and begin piecing together the base forms using clipping masks. We'll continue to add the shapes we made (and create more) to build up the detail.

Shape layers are extremely flexible and can be reshaped with the Direct Selection tool. Shape layers incur no degradation or blurriness when they are transformed, making them the perfect building blocks for this tutorial.

For textural interest, we'll mask and blend in some shots of foamy water and broccoli. To finalise, we'll use a series of adjustment layers and blend modes to get the perfect look.

READY THE BUILDING BLOCKS

CREATE SHAPE LAYERS AND PREPARE THE MODEL

01 CREATE SHAPES

Open Shapes.psd from FileSilo. There are a few example shapes. We'll make some more. Create a new layer. Select the Pen tool. In the options bar, set to Shape and choose a Fill colour. Click and drag on-canvas to create your shape. Create more shapes. Don't spend too much time refining the shapes though, as we can do that later.



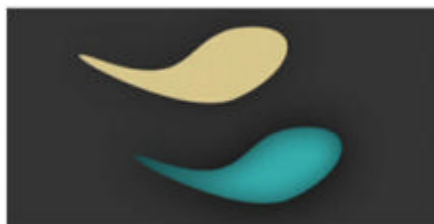
02 USE GRADIENT OVERLAY

Layer styles, accessible from the Layers palette's fx button, can add some quick dimension and interest to our flat shapes. Apply a Gradient Overlay with the Black and White preset for versatile dimension. You can use a darken blend mode like Multiply, a lighten mode like Screen, or a contrast mode like Soft Light. Adjust opacity and angle as needed.



03 ADD MORE STYLES

Inner Shadow can help bestow a bit more heft. Use sparingly with low opacity, choke, and size. Drop Shadow is key to building up the depth in the piece. Be moderate with opacity and size, and increase when needed. As you stack and overlap shapes, the shadowy interplay will create some nice complexity throughout.



OUR EXPERT

ANDRE VILLANUEVA
000-000-0000.com

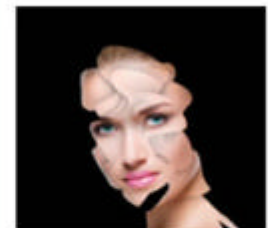
Andre fell in love with Photoshop while studying web design in college. He taught for several years in the media arts department. He's now an art director in Birmingham, USA.

SOURCE FILES

FileSilo contains the source files needed to complete the tutorial: blurs, shapes, foamy water shots, and broccoli! Feel free to supplement with your own textures and/or swap out the model shot, which can be downloaded from www.dreamstime.com (image number 51969906).

WORK IN PROGRESS

BUILD IT UP AND REFINE



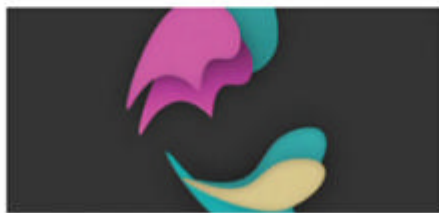
Progress 1: Layer the model forms



Progress 2: Add shapes and more elements

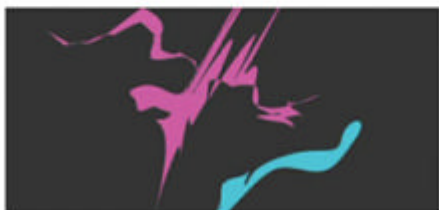


Progress 3: Apply adjustments



04 GROUP THE SHAPES

After creating a series of shapes, you can start combining them to create new forms. You can lower opacity and/or play with blend modes. Use Free Transform (Cmd/Ctrl+T) to Scale, Rotate, and Distort the shapes as needed. To help stay organised, put the layers associated with these new forms in groups in the Layers palette by selecting the layers and pressing Cmd/Ctrl+G. Now you can move all the layers by simply selecting the group. You can also Free Transform the whole bunch at once.



05 FREESTYLE IT

To create some sketchily dynamic forms and streaks, grab the Freeform Pen tool and go freestyle. Now, instead of plotting anchor points, just click and drag to draw the shape. You can use your digital tablet if you wish, or you can just stick with the mouse. You're bound to get some jagged and unrefined areas in the shape. Don't worry, these can be a nice change of pace from the smooth and regimented shapes you may already have in stock.

QUICK TIP

In PSDs with many layers, it's imperative you organise things lest you succumb under the sheer weight of a hundred or more nameless rogue layers. Corral similar layers in groups. Add descriptive names. Colour-code a group or layer by Cmd/right-clicking on its icon and choosing a colour.



07 MASK THE MODEL

Turn off visibility of all the layers below the merged layer. Select the Pen tool, and set to Path in the Options bar. Plot anchor points to trace a path around the model until you return to the origin. Next, refine the path. Wielding the Direct Selection tool, zoom in around the path and smooth out any problem areas. When complete, press Cmd/Ctrl+Return to convert the path to a selection, then press the Add Layer Mask button at the bottom of the Layers palette. Now click Save.



06 PREPARE THE MODEL

Open the model photo then click the Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer button at the bottom of the Layers palette, choose Solid Color. Pick #e47fea. Set to Overlay blend mode. Click the mask, press invert with Cmd/Ctrl+I.

Select the Brush tool. With a soft round brush at medium opacity paint white to enhance the lips. Repeat with two Color Fill layers (#2ecc2a, #1476d1) and blend them for the eyes. Now, select the topmost layer and merge with Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+Shift+E.



08 BUILD UP MODEL FORMS

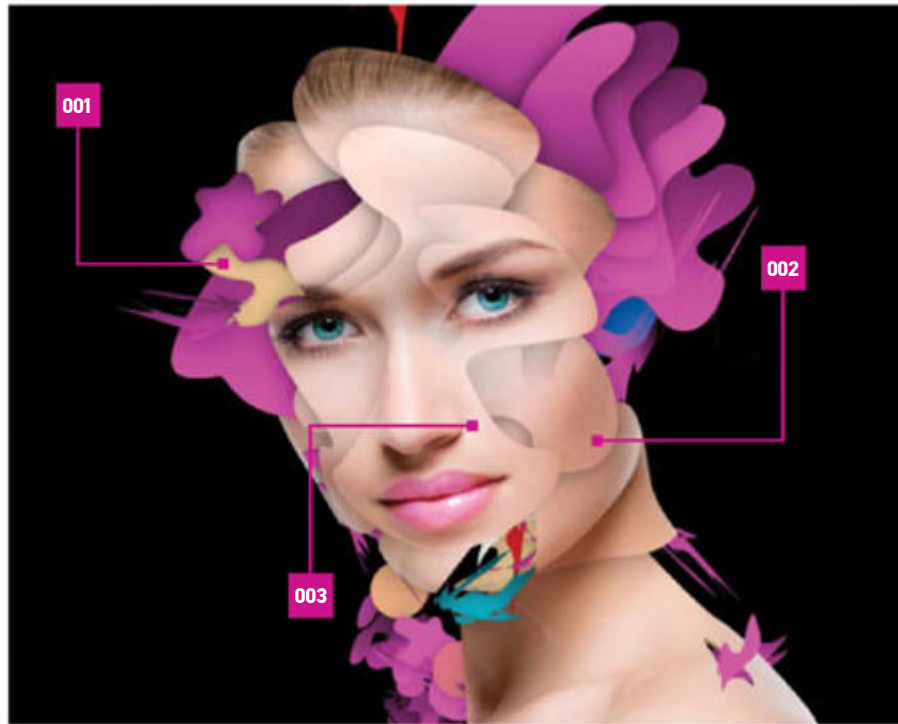
Open Start.psd. Go to File>Place (Place Linked in CC), choose the model. Drag in a shape you created and move it below the model. Create a clipping mask by Alt/Opt+clicking between the two layers. Then Free Transform the shape to fit. Make a duplicate of the model, drag another shape below it, and create another clipping mask and repeat. You can move the shapes independently. To move the model, first click one instance, Cmd/Ctrl+click the other model layers, then press Link Layers at the bottom of the Layers palette. You can now move all instances at once.

BUILD IT UP

ADD AND ARRANGE SHAPES AND ELEMENTS

09 BUILD UP THE PIECES

After completing the base model forms, which serve as the foundation for the piece, we'll supplement them with a multitude of coloured shapes adorned with gradient overlays, inner shadows, and drop shadows. Building these up provides depth and detail.



001 | MODEL SHAPES
The base model pieces are built up by using different shape layers to contain the model photo via clipping masks

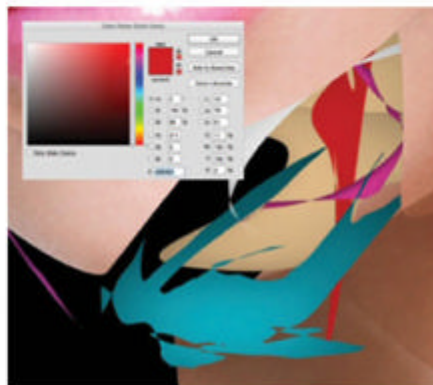
002 | COLOUR SHAPES
The many coloured shape layers, dressed with layer styles like Drop Shadow, are overlapped to provide complexity to the piece

003 | STAY ORGANISED
When working with many layers, use groups to corral similar layers. Further organise by nesting groups within a parent group



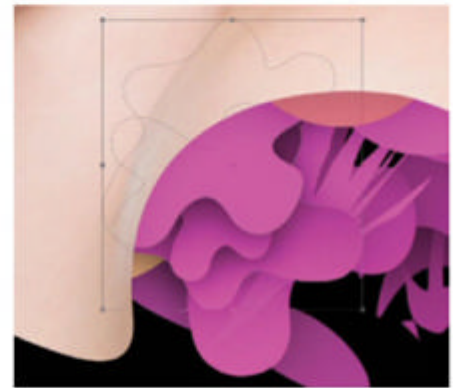
11 ADJUST THE STYLES

You may also need to adjust layer styles as you go along. By continuing to cluster shape layers with shadowy layer styles, you may start to get areas that are a bit too murky. You may also have areas where a bit more shading would be nice. To edit a layer's style, double-click on the adjustment. For Drop Shadow and Inner Shadow, adjust the opacity and size up or down. For Gradient Overlay, you can adjust opacity or even edit the gradient itself.



12 CHANGE COLOURS

As you continue to build up the pieces, you may find that you need to change some of the colour. With shape layers, it's a breeze to play with colour possibilities. Simply double-click on the Color Fill layer thumbnail and the Color Picker pops up. Choose a new colour and click OK. In CS6+, you can make sweeping colour changes. Cmd/Ctrl+click each shape you want to change, select a Shape tool, then use Fill in the options bar to change the colour.



10 REFINE THE SHAPES

Continue to move and adjust the pieces with the Move tool. To assist you in finding particular layers, you can tick Auto-Select in the options bar and set to Layer. You will probably need to manage the configuration of pieces throughout the majority of the tutorial, since adding new elements may necessitate you move, adjust, or remove existing elements. Free Transform as needed to Scale up or down, Rotate, or Distort. To transform multiple shapes at once, Cmd/Ctrl+click each layer, then transform.

“Shape layers incur no degradation or blurriness when transformed, making them the perfect building blocks”



13 CREATE SHARDS

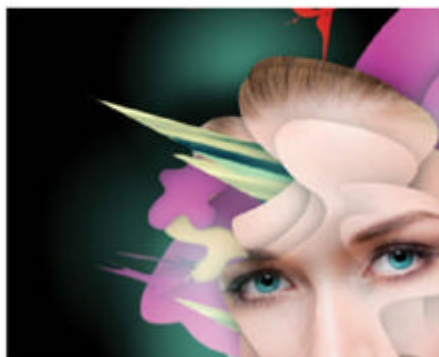
Let's create some shards. Go to File>Place (Place Embedded in CC) and grab Mat.jpg then click OK to confirm. Apply a layer mask by pressing the Add Layer Mask button at the bottom of the Layers palette. Click the mask then press Cmd/Ctrl+I to invert it. With the Polygonal Lasso tool, plot out the corners of the shard until you reach the origin. Fill the selection with white then deselect (Cmd/Ctrl+D). Unlinking the mask allows you to move and transform the image or mask independently. Repeat the process to add a few more shards.

COMPLETE THE BASE COMPOSITION

ADD TEXTURE AND FINALISE ARRANGEMENT

14 ADD GLOW

We'll save the majority of our colour adjustments and glows for the end phase, but we'll take a moment here to pause from our shape building to add a bit of colour. Click the Create New Fill or adjustment layer button at the bottom of the layers palette then choose Solid Color – pick #479784. Set the layer's blend mode to Screen. Then move it up or down the layers' stacking order until you find a suitable position. Invert the mask (Cmd/Ctrl+I), then paint it back with white and a large soft round brush.



QUICK TIP

We've given new meaning to the term organic food. To help lend an organic feel to the various surfaces, we blended and masked some broccoli. Be sure to keep a well-stocked and varied image library within easy reach. You never know what type of subject or textural qualities you'll need!



WORKING WITH SHAPE LAYERS

Shape layers can be created by using one of the Shape tools or by plotting a custom shape with the Pen tool (be sure to tick Shape in the options bar). Whether you start with a geometric or custom shape, you can edit the vector path by using the Direct Selection tool. Click and drag on the anchor points to adjust. You can use the Add and Delete Anchor Point tools to add/delete points on the path. These tools allow you to start with stock shapes and make them your own. To save a shape, go to Edit>Define Custom Shape.

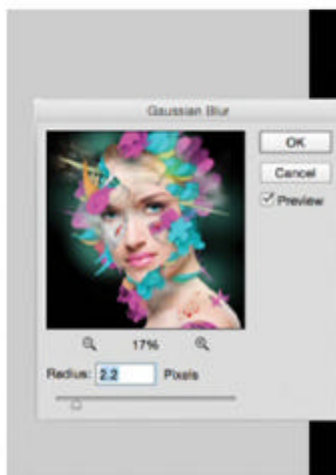
15 ADD ORGANIC TEXTURE

We'll use some broccoli to add a touch of texture. Place (Embedded) Broccoli.jpg above a specific area, or simply place at the top of all the current layers. Set to Soft Light blend mode. Add a layer mask and then invert it. Paint back with white to selectively apply the texture. If you need to peek at the texture, you can Shift+click the mask to disable (Shift+click again to enable). Place more broccoli in other areas. To get a deeper blend, try a darken mode like Color Burn.



17 FINALISE SHAPES

Add or create any last shapes to complete the base composition. Layer some shapes at the top to push the dimension. Paint some black in a layer below to add shadows if needed. Also, go through and see if any shapes and areas need to be moved or altered. Don't be afraid to remove elements that don't add value to your piece. If you're afraid to delete, turn off the visibility until you can make a definite decision. Zoom in and out, and use the Rotate Canvas tool to help with your judgment.



18 MERGE AND BLUR

With the top layer selected, press Cmd/Ctrl+Option/Alt+Shift+E to merge the visible layers then right-click on the layer and choose Convert to Smart Object. This will allow us to apply Smart Filters to the merged layer. Go to

16 ADD WATER SWIRLS

Now we'll borrow some foamy ocean water shots to add some interesting swirls to the mix. Place (Embedded) Water1.jpg and position it in an area where you want to add the swirl effect. Add a layer mask, invert, then paint back with white to apply. To better blend the swirls, you can drop the opacity or try changing the blend mode (we used Screen and Overlay). To add more swirls, duplicate it, re-position, and adjust the mask. For some variety, you can also use Water2.jpg.



Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. Set the Radius to 2.2 pixels and click OK. Restore some clarity in key areas by painting black in the Smart Filter mask, reducing the blur. If you want to adjust the blur, double click on the Smart Filter, adjust the Radius, and click OK again.



19 SHARPEN IT UP

Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate the merged layer. Drag the Smart Filter to the trash. Go to Filter>Other>High Pass and set the Radius to two pixels, then click OK. Set the layer to Overlay. Add a layer mask, then paint black in areas to reduce the sharpening. You might be wondering why we didn't use the Smart Filter mask like the last step. By using the layer mask, you can remove the sharpening and provide a window to the underlying layer.

■ QUICK TIP

Are you getting tired of swapping back and forth between the Add and Delete Anchor Point tools when adjusting shape layers? Just use the Pen tool and tick Auto Add/Delete in the options bar. Now simply click to add a point, or click on an existing point to remove it.

22 ADD COLOURS

Now we'll fine-tune the colouring throughout via a series of Color Fill layers. For each colour you want to use, add a Color Fill layer, choose the colour, then click OK. Invert the mask, then paint back with white to add. Set the blend mode to Overlay (if too intense, try Soft Light). You can also lower the opacity to tone it down. Here we added some greens (#6ed728, #56972a) and cool colours (#11fcf9, #1434f4), as well as a dark flesh colour (#7e4c4c).

23 APPLY MORE ADJUSTMENTS

We'll continue with a few more adjustment layers that will refine the look. Click the Add New Fill or Adjustment Layer button in the Layers palette, then choose Gradient Map. Load the Photographic Toning presets and choose Cobalt-Iron 2. Set the layer to Soft Light, and reduce the Opacity to 40%. Now add another Color Lookup layer, choose Foggy Night. Set the layer to Multiply and drop Opacity to 50%. Paint black in the mask to reduce further.



20 OVERLAY BLUR

We'll now begin the final stage where we really nail the look and atmosphere we desire. It's advisable to create a group at the top to contain these. You can turn the group's visibility on and off to see how things are looking. We'll use a series of adjustment and fill layers, but first let's kick things off by overlaying a blur shot. Place (Embedded) Blur.jpg. Set to Overlay blend mode. Add a layer mask, then paint black in areas to reduce.



21 USE COLOR LOOKUP AND VIBRANCE

Click the Add New Fill or Adjustment Layer button in the Layers palette, choose Color Lookup. Pick the Candlelight preset then paint black in the mask to reduce in areas such as the main facial features and the water swirl textures. Add another adjustment layer, this time choose Vibrance. Max out the vibrance, which increases the vibrancy while protecting skin tones. For an extra bit of kick, you can pump up the Saturation to +10 (or more). If increasing, you can paint black in the mask to tone down in areas.



24 USE LEVELS

Let's brighten things up a bit. Click the Add New Fill or Adjustment Layer button in the Layers palette, and choose Levels. You can use the sliders under the histogram to adjust the intensity levels of Shadows, Midtones, and Highlights in the image. Here we nudged the Midtones leftward, making a gamma adjustment that lightens the overall image. At the bottom, we moved the dark output level slider slightly inward to limit how dark things can get. Fiddle with the sliders until you're happy.



© Frank Att



SKY CAPITAL

FRANK ATT

FIND OUT HOW FRANK ATT CHALLENGED HIMSELF TO PAINT THIS FANTASY SCENE OF A CITY IN THE SKY

For 29-year-old Frank Att ([frankatt.deviantart.com](#)) painting is a hobby – by day the Nuremberg resident is a software developer. “Everything I’ve learned about art is self-taught, with some books, a lot of resources and tutorials on the internet, and learning by doing,” he explains.

“Most of my paintings are environments and landscapes that are based in fantasy settings. I usually paint landscape images like mountains, rocks, woods, etc, with only few buildings like a castle in the distance. The intention of this piece was to push myself out of my comfort zone by showing a city from a closer viewpoint.

“I really love to paint fantasy settings like castles, airships and flying rocks. So I decided to put these elements together and create a capital city in the sky. Inspiration is something I can get anywhere. But if I push myself out of my comfort zone I try to do a lot of sketches and search for photos and paintings by other artists to get as many ideas and references as possible.”

01 INITIAL SKETCH I started the painting with sketches to get ideas and find the main composition. The line drawing was on a single layer to deactivate it in further steps.





02 | ROUGH COLOURS

Then I added the main colours and began to paint the main islands and clouds to get a rough direction for the painting.



03 | CREATING THE BUILDINGS

In this step I painted the main structure of the houses and added some first details to the houses here and there.

“The intention of this piece was to push myself out of my comfort zone by showing a city from a closer viewpoint”



04 | BACKGROUND ADJUSTMENT AND INITIAL DETAILS

I changed the background – the sky, clouds and added the island – because it was too empty before. I also worked on the buildings and details.



05 | CHANGE OF THE MAIN BUILDING

The main building didn't work for me, so I changed it and adjusted the light and shadow layers. After that, I put the first shapes of the airships into the painting.

06 | ADDING SOME DETAILS

The main focus in this step was on putting details everywhere. I moved the foreground further towards to the horizon line, so it fits better into the whole image.



07 | MARKET AND MORE DETAILING

I added a bazaar on the bridge and did a lot of detailing like adding people, adjusting the foreground and erasing some buildings and some other minor changes to the buildings.



08 | LAST ADJUSTMENTS

In the final step, I worked on effects (atmosphere, light, shadows, clouds, smoke) and added some more details here and there. Never forget to sign your painting, if it's a personal piece.



MAKING CHANGES

SOMETIMES YOUR INITIAL IDEAS DON'T WORK OUT

Don't be afraid to make changes to a composition. In this case, the main castle building was transformed from one style of building into another, improving the painting by adding a stronger area of focus to both the city scene and the image itself. The city now seems stronger and more powerful because of the fortress at its centre, and the solid shape encourages the eye to explore the surrounding scenery.



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CREATE A SCI-FI COMPOSITE FROM PHOTOS

EDIT AND COMBINE ORDINARY STOCK PHOTOS TO CREATE A COMPOSITE ILLUSTRATION THAT'S OUT OF THIS WORLD

Sci-fi cityscapes are often towering metropolises packed with futuristic architecture, and you may sometimes wonder how to even get started with illustrating one. Take a tip from the likes of *Blade Runner* and use today's architecture as a basis.

This tutorial demonstrates how photos of everyday buildings, environments and structures can be edited and combined to create the city of the future in Photoshop.

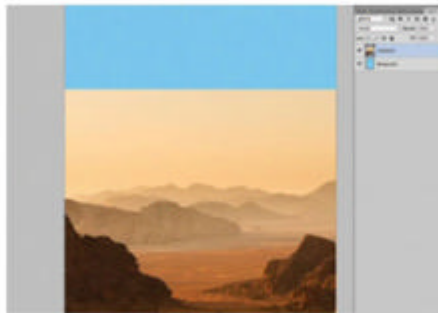
Start by assembling a portfolio of images. We've linked to images from iStock throughout this tutorial, but there are lots of free stock sites

like Pixabay, Free Images and Unsplash that are perfect for sourcing cityscape photos. Try to make sure that all of the photos you choose are lit from the same direction, or choose photos that you can flip, rotate or warp to make sure that the light's in the right place. Lighting is what makes or breaks a composite.

Once you've assembled the requisite pieces – look for towers, skyscrapers, and neon signs, as well as a suitable backdrop and sky – it's time to take your photos into Photoshop and use masking, adjustment layers and several other tricks to unify them into one futuristic cityscape image.

SET THE BASIS FOR THE SCENE

CREATE THE BACKDROP AND SKY THEN START BUILDING THE CITY

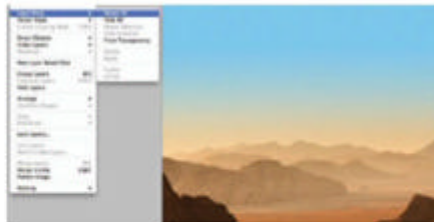


01 SET UP THE SCENE

Create a new document, with a background colour of #7bc7ee. At full size this illustration is 235mm x 302mm and 300dpi – on some machines you may prefer to work smaller. This will help with processing, and also enable you to use medium resolution comp images. You can download from sites like iStock and use these non-commercially.

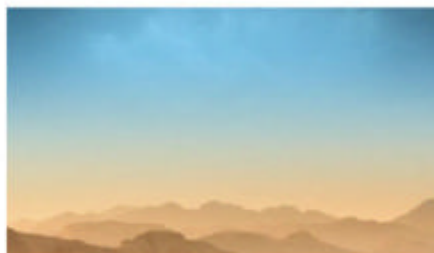
03 INSERT THE SKY

Find a picture of a blue but brooding sky (iStock 10830462) for the top of the image. With the Gradient tool, mask up this time, then give the mask a more curved look by airbrushing out with black, and back in with white. This is best achieved with a Soft Round brush, with Shape Dynamics switched off, and Hardness at 0%. Keep Flow low, at around 1%, and certainly no more than 10.



02 ADD THE DESERT BACKGROUND

Find a picture of a desert for the background (iStock 11662814). Scale (Edit> Transform>Scale) and place the horizon just below the centre of the page, so that the viewer will have a slightly elevated position – above the streets but below the towers. This will also help the viewer read across the action. Go to Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All. Press D on your keyboard to select the colour black, and use the Gradient tool to fade the top of the photo to the blue of the canvas.



OUR EXPERT

JOE ROBERTS
JoeRoberts.co.uk
@Joe_R_Roberts

Joe Roberts is a digital artist based in London, with 20 years experience, specialising in book covers and game art.

WORK IN PROGRESS

FROM PHOTO BASE TO SCI-FI CITY



Progress 1: Prepare for the cityscape



Progress 2: Start to add buildings



Progress 3: Make adjustments

04 PREPARE FOR THE CITYSCAPE

For the foreground, something desert-like and craterous should do the trick (iStock 60036860). Mask the top. To give the illusion of a landscape large enough to accommodate a city, you'll also need to defocus it slightly. With the layer selected, go to Filter>Blur, and apply a Gaussian Blur with a radius of around 0.5 pixels. You can add a back wall to the crater using a similar photo.

QUICK TIP

Remember that you can flip and rotate the photos (or parts of photos) that you're using so that the light comes from a consistent direction – this looks more convincing than painting in new light over photos with different light sources.

05 MAKE THE CITY'S BASE

The city is going to be built inside a dome, so it needs to be sitting on an appropriate base. Observatories provide the right kind of structure (iStock 37792604). Using the Pen tool create a path around the base, then in the Paths palette make a selection of 0.3 pixels and copy-paste it in. To remove any stray edges, go to Layer>Matting>Defringe, then using the Blur tool, with a soft brush of around 5px, quickly work around the edge of the base. This scene will be lit from the upper left, so consider that when choosing photos. Now add a Levels layer, clipped to the base, to deepen the shadows and raise the highlights.



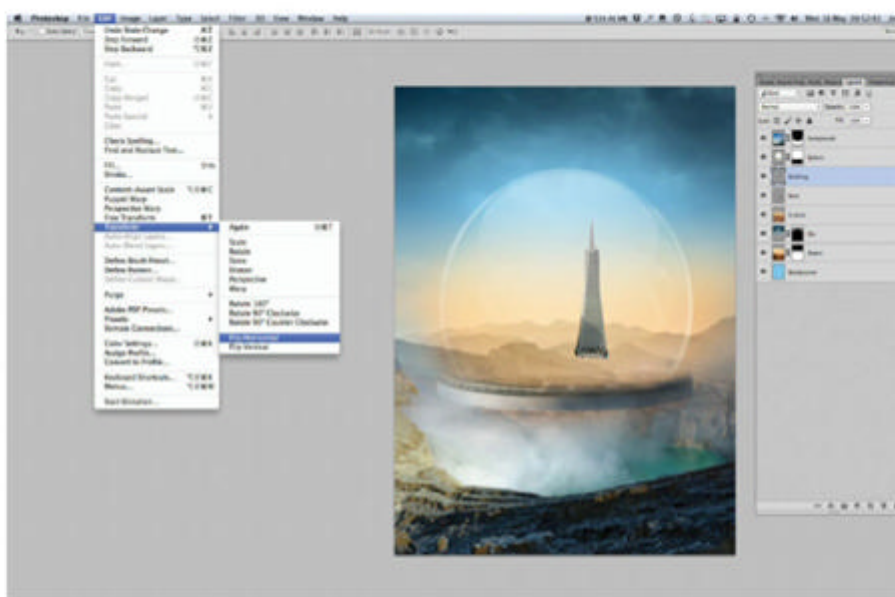
07 START TO ADD BUILDINGS

You now need a good selection of buildings. It's important that the photos you choose are shot from angles that are compatible with the spectator's view – looking down on structures nearer the base, but up towards the higher towers that penetrate the dome.



06 CREATE THE SPHERE

For the dome you need to start with a sphere. You can render one in Photoshop using 3D tools, or use a stock image (iStock 30625584). Scale and Place the sphere approximately where you'd like the dome to sit (above the Base layer but below Foreground), then add a Gaussian Blur of about 0.7 pixels. To make it look glassy, reduce its Opacity to 95% and change the mode from Normal to Soft Light. So that the sphere can bulge a little at the bottom, go to Edit>Transform>Scale, then in Warp Mode pull on the points and handles to achieve the desired amount of flex. Finally add a layer mask, and paint away the lower parts of the dome that are not needed.



08 FINESSE THE EDGES

Create a clipping path around a building (iStock 2876631). Make a selection of 0.2 pixels, and, beneath the Dome layer, copy and paste it into the scene. Again, for best

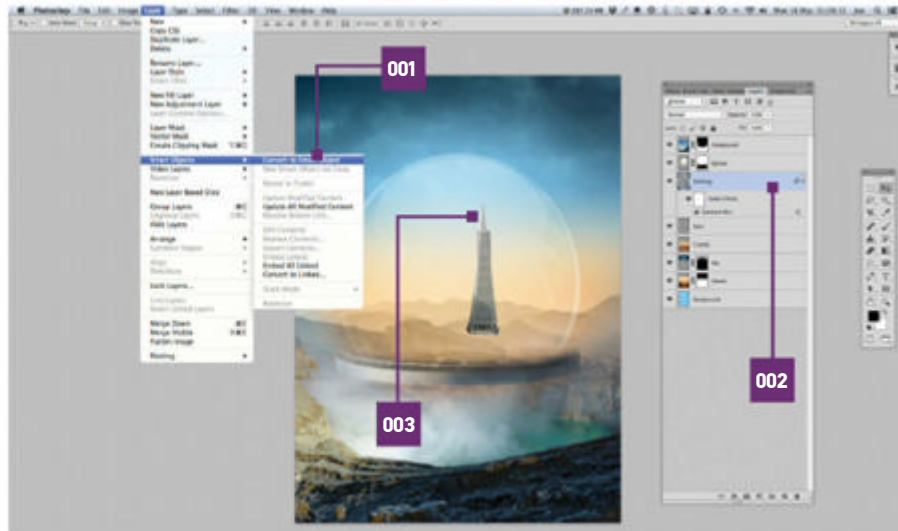
results go to Layer>Matting>Defringe, then Blur tool the edges. Remember that the main light source is from the top left, so, if necessary, flip the layer horizontally, by going to Edit>Transform>Flip Horizontally.

ADD THE BUILDINGS

USE STOCK PHOTOS AND PHOTOSHOP TOOLS TO POPULATE THE CITY

09 PRESERVE DATA WITH SMART OBJECTS

The city itself will be quite complex and you may want to go back and re-edit many elements, many times, so to preserve the original data convert the Building layer into a Smart Object (Layer>Smart Objects>Convert to Smart Object) then add a Gaussian Blur of between 0.2 and 0.6 pixels. You can now change the amount of blur at any time by clicking the little arrow at the right of the layer title and double clicking on Gaussian Blur.



001 | SMART OBJECTS
Convert all of the cityscape elements to Smart Objects so that you have full control over them and can rearrange them if necessary

002 | SMART FILTERS
Once you've made a Smart Object and applied a filter, use the icon on the layer palette to change the filter strength at any time

003 | CONSISTENT LIGHT
Flip or rotate some of your image elements so that all the light is coming from the same direction. If light isn't consistent the image won't work



10 REDUCE OPACITY

Reduce the Opacity of the Building layer to around 90%. This will add an additional sense of depth and distance, and lend the layer some of the colour and tone of its environment. With all that metal and glass in the scene, it will also create an illusion of reflections. Now add a layer mask, and pull a gradient up and over the base of the structure. Ghosting this out helps further with depth, and as the city comes together and it allows the buildings to be moved around the composition freely without tearing out their foundations.

“You may want to go back and re-edit many elements, many times, so to preserve the original data convert the Building layer into a Smart Object”



11 INCREASE CONTRAST

If the building is looking a little faint now, you need to up the contrast. Clip on a Levels adjustment layer, with the black set at around 26 and the white at 245. It also needs to look a little bluer, to reflect its environment, so clip on a Color Balance layer and in Midtones set Cyan/Red to -8 and Yellow/Blue to +20.



12 ADD MORE BUILDINGS

Repeat this process with more buildings and structures. Play with Levels, Color Balance, and Blur as you go, keeping each element within a certain range but varied enough to appeal in an illustrative sense. If a structure is looking too colourful, add a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer and pull the Saturation slider to the left as you see fit.



13 SEPARATE THE BUILDINGS

Sometimes, in an illustration like this, elements can get a bit lost amongst those around them. If that happens to any of the buildings, apply a bit of misting behind its layer, to separate it slightly. Select a brush like the one used earlier and paint a subtle dusting behind the building. With the Brush tool selected, pick a light colour from the background, by holding down Opt/Alt and clicking on a colour you like. Again you can keep the flow at around 1%.

ADD THE FINAL FLOURISHES

USE ADJUSTMENTS AND CREATIVE EFFECTS TO BRING IT ALL TOGETHER



14 ORGANISE LAYERS

If you haven't already, now would be a good time to start organising your layers into folders – things are about to get busy. Select all five layers associated with Building 2, then click the Folder icon at the bottom of the palette. Name the resultant folder, 'Building 2 Folder'. The reason you should call a folder, 'folder' is so that you can easily distinguish it from its contents when right-clicking the image, as sometimes you will have many layers and folders, and folders within folders. Organise the rest of the layers accordingly, including a Buildings folder for all your individual Buildings folders.

QUICK TIP

When using adjustment layers, you will achieve better results by stacking subtle effects, rather than using a single adjustment at full strength. Build up several adjustment layers to achieve the exact effect you want – even of that means you have ten Levels adjustments all at low opacity!



TIE COLOURS TOGETHER

When you're adding in high contrast stock photos to a sci-fi cityscape, set them to Screen and the darker areas will disappear. This trick using Screen mode is really useful and is used here not just on the waterfall but with many other elements of the piece. Working with dark stock images, the blacker the better, the lights in the city, the neon signs, the afterburners and contrails of the vehicles, are all created using the same technique. Even the mist and shards of light in sky are achieved this way.



15 CREATE HEIGHT

Keep adding buildings and structures until the city looks suitably dense. Once you are happy with the composition you can start working at street level. The same principles apply here but you will probably find Transforming in Warp Mode useful to establish a layout that fits within the curvature of the base. Add a layer mask to your Buildings folder, then very subtly mask away some of the tops of the tallest buildings – just enough to give them a look of misty heights.

17 ADD THE WATERFALL

For the waterfall, find a suitable image with light water against a darker background. Change the opacity mode to Screen, and you'll notice that the darker areas start to disappear. Clipping on a Levels adjustment and deepening the blacks while nudging up the whites will take this even further. Then it's just a case of masking away what's left, while keeping any rocks etc that you might want, for a cleanly isolated flow.



18 FINISHING TOUCHES

Finally, create another Adjustments folder. This one will sit right at the top. Add a Color Balance layer, select Shadows then pull the slider -15 towards Cyan. The next Color Balance layer will be used for



16 MAKE ADJUSTMENTS

Create a new folder above Buildings, and call it Adjustments. Create a Levels adjustment layer, softly masked around the city, and use it to increase the contrast slightly. Create a second Levels layer and use it to increase the light levels, then mask it so that it only applies to, in and around the top right of the dome.

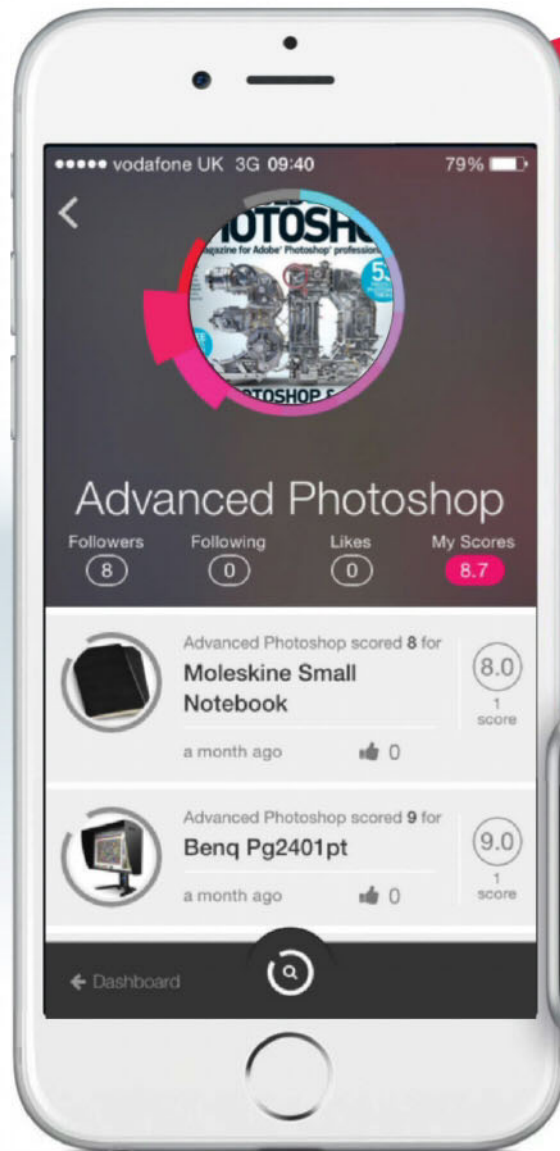


the Midtones. Increase these slightly, particularly the Green as this will help with some of the organic elements without contradicting the desert. Play with Levels, Vibrance, Brightness and Contrast, until you find a look you are happy with.

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“The inspiration for Gravity was being in a place where you don't actually belong and not knowing what you are doing”



GRAVITY

RAPHAEL JIWA

DISCOVER HOW RAPHAEL JIWA CREATED AN OUT-OF-THIS-WORLD PHOTOMANIPULATION USING PHOTO STOCK AND HIS OWN BRUSHES

Malawian-born Raphael Jiwa (www.elrafagiant.com) came to the UK at the age of eight and it was then he was introduced to a computer for the first time. "[It was] love at first sight! After clicking around I found Microsoft Paint and I hated it, but drawing random stuff took me to a different place

so after a while I searched for better software and stumbled on Gimp. That relationship just didn't work out so my ITC teacher introduced me to Adobe Photoshop 7, and since then I have been designing my heart out."

"The inspiration for Gravity was being in a place where you don't actually belong and not knowing

what you are doing," Jiwa explains. "I used the monkey in space trying to repair a spaceship in a futuristic environment to illustrate it."

Based mainly on using the Pen tool, his own custom brushes, Gaussian blurs, blending modes and the Warp and Transform tools, Jiwa built this image up from photo stock.

01 CUTTING AND MERGING

I cut out the background of this image and then used the Eraser to rub out the face. Then I used the Clone Stamp tool to bring back bits of the helmet.



02 SETTING THE SCENE

I made the background with simple Brush tools by making simple cloud-like effects and adding gradient maps then merging to add a star pattern.



03 CONTROL CENTRE

I made the control centre in a different document and then dragged it in. I warped and skewed it to fit the perspective then added a blue Outer Glow.



CREATE MOVIE-POSTER STYLE ARTWORK

LEARN HOW TO CREATE A MOVIE POSTER EFFECT WITH MOODY TONES AND SUPERHERO EFFECTS

There's something about a costumed superhero that brings hope no matter how bleak real life gets, but you don't just have to look to the skies, or to the movies, to become inspired. When it comes to powers and superhuman abilities, it's easy to get lost in the theatrics of it all.

Creating your own superhero-themed masterpiece is easy as long as you ground your work in reality. Remember, there's a fine line between dramatic and melodramatic – don't cross it.

Use colour and light to your advantage. Warm colours come forward, while cool colours go

backward. Bright areas attract your eyes first and dark areas are easily overlooked. Use lines and points of interest to keep the attention circling around your image. Doing this will keep the viewer's eye focused on the key elements, and not wandering all over the page.

Always direct their attention to the most important aspects of your image. Falling rain and other effects can be distracting, so stay subtle and keep it balanced. Sometimes adding too many effects can break up clean lines that otherwise allowed for an organic flow to the image. Read on to discover how to create your own movie poster.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

ISOLATE THE MODEL AND WORK ON YOUR COSTUME

01 KNOW WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Before you begin with anything, always have your end goal in mind. What kind of effect do you want to achieve? Go through existing movie posters for inspiration and sketch a few designs. Look for existing posters that catch your eye. Don't be afraid to get inspiration from what's already out there; anything that's dynamic is open for consideration.



02 KEEP YOUR CLIENT'S SPECS IN MIND

Once you have a solid idea of how you want your image to look like, apply your client's specifications to your design. How can your ideas fit into what the client wants from you? Did your client provide you with any starting images or specific directions? Go with your creative instincts, but always keep your client happy.



03 ISOLATE THE MODEL

Begin by removing the model from the existing background. Hopefully, the model was shot against a solid background. While green is often used for video, a solid white is much better for compositing images because less work is required. If not, manual masking will need to be done. First, silhouette the entire model by using Filter>Color Range.



OUR EXPERT

JOHN ROSS
www.TheArtOfRetouching.com
@ArtOfRetouching

John educates photographers and retouchers by helping them expand their creativity through Photoshop from his website, and the classes he teaches from New Haven, Connecticut.

SOURCE FILES

On FileSilo there are two cityscapes to help you perfect the background to your movie poster. You can download the model photo from www.dreamstime.com, image number 36725883

WORK IN PROGRESS

WORK IN PROGRESS



Progress 1: General changes



Progress 2: Detailed work



Progress 3: Refinements

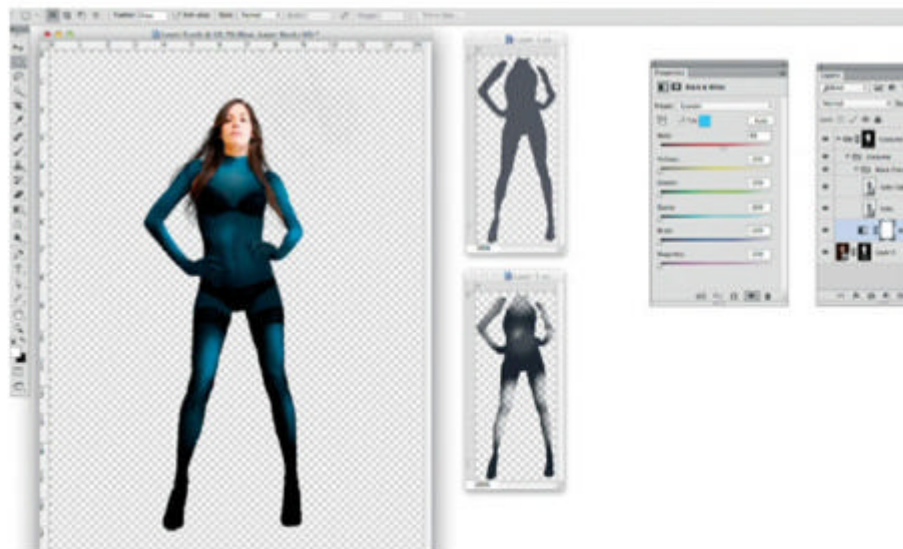
04 USE THE REFINE MASK

Apply this selection to a layer mask and use Select>Refine Mask to brush the fine hair details back. If you have a strangely coloured background like green, then the Decontaminate Colors option can help. Finally, use a small brush with 80% Hardness on the layer mask to paint away any areas that Color Range could not get. For silhouettes, you need to come close and be accurate. Cut into the subject one or two pixels to avoid the background colour. No one will ever miss these few pixels.



05 WORK ON YOUR COSTUME

Reselect your layer mask with Cmd/Ctrl and click the layer mask you just created, it will reselect. Darken the skin by applying the selection to a new layer and filling the selected area with black. Remove the skin areas with a black brush on the



layer mask. Bring back the details of your selected area by setting the layer's blend mode to Multiply and adjust the opacity. Use Layer>Adjustment Layer>Black and White. Tint with 0R 198G 255B and pull down all the colours to -200 except Red 88 for enhanced contrast.

06 CREATE A GLOWING EFFECT

A trademark superhero usually comes with some trademark superpowers. Keep your hero superhuman by adding creative elements in the costume and around your model. Here, you can simulate a superhero glow with a white brush on a new layer. For cleaner lines, use the Pen tool instead, and stroke the paths you created. With white colour for either tool, create a glowing effect using a Layer>Layer Style>Outer Glow with the following properties: Screen blend mode, 43% Opacity, RGB values of 150R 219G 255B, 8% Spread, and a Size of 46%.



07 THE INKED COMIC LOOK

While it's very popular to ground superheroes as close to reality as possible these days, it's still good to remember that they came from the KAPOW-filled panels of your favourite comics. Stay true to your superhero's comic book origin story by keeping the inked effect intact. To achieve a more contrasted and gritty comic look, go to Layer>Adjustment Layer>Curve with two points: Input 91, Output 3 and Input 197 Output 214. This will help make your image look more reminiscent of your favourite graphic novel.

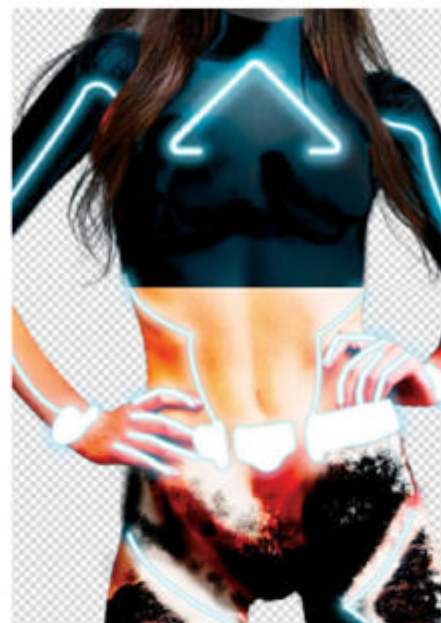


■ QUICK TIP

You should always try to make things easier for yourself from the get-go. Simplify your image by addressing the basics first, such as isolating the model. Then, create your costume and other dynamic elements like glowing effects, all while keeping your end goal and your client's specifications in mind.

08 REMOVE GARMENTS UNDER THE COSTUME

A secret identity is best kept as it is – a secret. Remove the undergarments of the original model beneath the costume you have just created once the basic look you're gunning for is achieved. Create a new blank layer right above the model layer. Because of the previous Curve, you will no longer need to be accurate. Still, you should try to match the general skin tone with a paintbrush and cover over the fabric areas. With some tone sculpting, you can adequately remove those old clothes under the costume.



THE OVERALL FEEL

ADD DYNAMIC ELEMENTS LIKE CITY AND SKY LAYERS, LENS FLARES, AND TEXTURES

09 WORK ON YOUR BACKGROUND

You can either achieve a subtle yet effective impact with your cityscape, or you can run the risk of going overboard. It's important to find the right balance, as you don't want your dynamic elements to overshadow your superhero. So be sure to keep the background sharp, but subdued. This can be achieved by using a slightly lighter black to show distance.



001 | SELECT YOUR BACKGROUND IMAGE

Place city.tif behind the model layer, removing the blue sky with the Magic Wand. Scale this layer to fit correctly, making the buildings look realistic

002 | SELECT YOUR MOODY SKY

For added effect, place a moody sky photo behind the cityscape. You can use HDR software like Photomatix from www.hdrsoft.com to bring out the detail

003 | MATCH THE COLOR AND TONES

As you keep adding layers from different sources, it's important to keep them all balanced and use the same tones and colours



11 MAKE COLOURS POP

As your image comes to life, you can make selected colours pop by using Layer>Adjustment Layer>Vibrance. Take a moment to further understand these two sliders. Vibrance will first affect the cool colours like blues, while Saturation is quicker to affect the warm colours like reds. For this image, you can easily adjust the model's hair and face with subtle adjustments to the Saturation slider. When you're satisfied with your results for the warm hues, compensate with Vibrance as needed. Brighten overall with Levels or Curves, and touch up with a cloned layer.



12 CREATE VISUAL INTEREST

You can make the most out of the various visual elements in the photo, so don't be afraid to experiment with the different warm and cool colours. Add some soft details in the hair by using a new blank layer, and a very small brush set to 10 or 20% Opacity. All these are good ways to adjust colours as the light bounces around. Select hues that are already in the image by using the Eyedropper tool. You can also paint in highlights and shadows depending on your taste.



10 ADD SOME BRICK

Place brick.tif (on FileSilo) below the city image. Use Edit>Free Transform to scale it to fit, and rotate it -4.70 degrees. Use Layer>New>Layer and paint in with a black brush at 20% Opacity to add some depth, with a shadow under the pool rim, under the model's feet, and above the edge of the image. You can add some extra detail with Filter>Filter Gallery>Film Grain with values of Grain 4, Highlight 0, and Intensity 0.

“Tone trumps colour. If the image looks balanced in greyscale, it will look great in colour”



13 BALANCE TONE AND COLOUR

The face needs to be bright because it is so important. Just be careful to have it match the overall scene. Place a temporary Layer>Adjustment Layer>Black and White over the top, and you can check your tones. Tone trumps colour. This means that as long as the image looks nice and balanced in greyscale, it will usually look great in colour. Make a selection around the hair and face, then use Layers>Adjustment Layers>Exposure with values +1.89 Exposure, -0.1313 Offset, and 1.03 Gamma.

ALIGNING WITH YOUR END GOAL

ADDING FINISHING TOUCHES TO CREATE THE PERFECT MOVIE POSTER

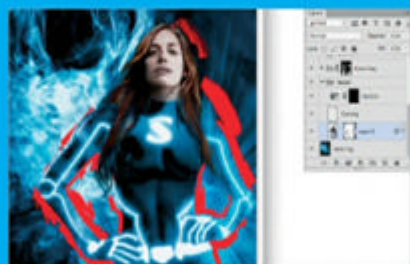


14 LOOK AT THE BIG PICTURE

Because you are working on a superhero piece, there is a tendency to add too many effects and too many adjustments. But creating a heroic piece does not mean you should use every effect that Photoshop has to offer. To avoid getting your nose too deep into the details, detach yourself, take a step back, and look at the big picture. Zoom out, inspect your image, and make sure everything is still well balanced. It's easy to add too much detail with the effects.

■ QUICK TIP

Superhero movie posters may have unrealistic elements set in a realistic world, and it's up to you to find the right mix of making something fantastic yet believable. Just be sure to keep the focus on your main hero and not on everything else going on around them.



■ MASKING, ADJUSTMENTS, AND NON-DESTRUCTIVE WORKFLOW

Masking is one of the most important and basic skills you need to have when doing any retouching work, especially when you're working on a composite piece like this one. Because the elements around the model are dynamic and changing, working non-destructively is now more crucial than ever to allow you to go back and forth between your adjustments in case you change your mind at any point while working. For more on masking and how to work non-destructively, go to www.TheArtOfRetouching.com for more in-depth tutorials on everything you need to know to become a master retoucher.



15 KEEP THE VIEWER FOCUSED

Movie posters always keep the viewer's eye focused on the central image. In this case, you want your viewer to hone in on your superhero model right away; even with all the fancy glow effects and smoke layers in the background. To ensure that you can effectively direct your viewer's attention, remember that the brightest areas keep eyes focused. Despite all the textures and swirls pulling your eye around, it is always brought back to the centre, which is where your superhero should be.

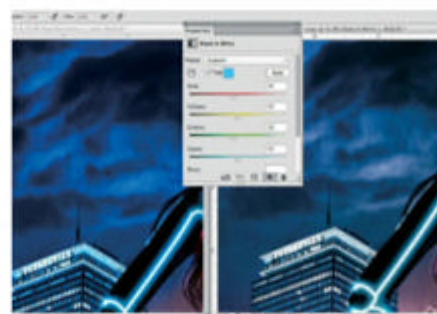
17 OUT OF GAMUT

Colour settings are completely different for online images, when compared with printed images. In prints, you may find that the final image has Out of Gamut issues while working in RGB (Red, Green and Blue). That means the colours are so bright and pure that the magazine's printing process will lose details because it cannot reproduce the colours accurately. By carefully reducing the Saturation, the colours can be brought closer to the CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black) colour model that magazines use.



16 USE COLOUR PALETTES SPARINGLY

Notice that the current movie posters out in cinemas today often use limited colour palettes. When you want a particular element of your image to stand out, then using a new colour will help. Whenever a different colour is introduced, it is used as a way to draw attention to it. This is a powerful tool to control what you want your viewer to notice. Here, it is the face, hair, and sky that have the only red, yellow and orange colours. Ultimately, the only warm elements.



18 LET IT RAIN

You can add some extra texture by adding the storm's rain to the picture. Creating rain is easier than you may think. Simply create a blank layer with Layer>New>Layer and fill it with black. Use Filter>Noise>Add Noise with a value

of 50, uniform and Monochromatic. Then apply Filter>Blue>Gaussian Blur with Radius of 0.50. Lastly, use Filter>Blue>Motion Blur with Angle 60 and Distance 50. By doing this, you will enhance the mood of the storm by getting everything wet.

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25 QUICK FIXES FOR PRO DESIGNERS

TIPS, TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES TO HELP YOU IMPROVE YOUR SPEED AND WORKFLOW
IN PHOTOSHOP, WITH ADVICE FROM PROFESSIONAL DESIGNERS AND ARTISTS

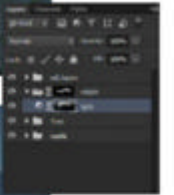
01. RELIGHT SCENE ELEMENTS FAST WITH QUICK MASK

MATTE PAINTER AND CONCEPT ARTIST JACEK PILARSKI (WWW.JACEKPILARSKI.COM) EXPLAINS HOW HE USES PHOTOSHOP'S QUICK MASK FUNCTION IN HIS ENVIRONMENT DESIGNS

© Jacek Pilarski

01 | SELECT ELEMENTS TO RELIGHT

The first step in relighting elements is to select the [layers] we will work with. You can also put a black layer in the bottom for better separation from other elements. We use the keyboard shortcut of Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+Shift+E, which creates a new layer out of all the visible layers.



02 | CREATE THE SELECTION

Next, use Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+U to convert it into B&W mode. Play with Curves (Cmd/Ctrl+M) and try to manipulate the sliders to get the desired black-and-white mask. When you're finished, use Cmd/Ctrl+A to select and Cmd/Ctrl+C to copy our layer. Hit Q to go into Quick Mask mode and use Cmd/Ctrl+V to paste the layer. Press Q to quit Quick Mask mode.

03 | USE THE SELECTION AS A MASK

While your selection is still visible, create an adjustment layer and the mask will be created along with it automatically. To keep a non-destructive workflow put this adjustment layer into a folder and create a mask on top. Hide it by inverting the mask and use a brush to reveal the elements you want to change in your work.

02. FASTER PAINTING TRICKS

Freelance graphic designer Wendy Stephens (WWW.DARKIRISDESIGN.CO.UK) talks us through her workflow process, building up digital paintings quickly and effectively



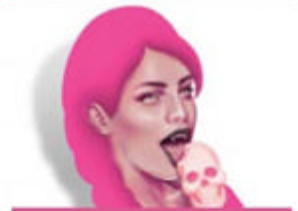
Start in greyscale: "The biggest time saver for me was discovering painting in greyscale before adding colour. I paint using just one rough-edged brush, adjusting the Opacity and Size as I work. I organise my brushes by using Window>Brush Presets>Preset Manager and then drag and drop them into the order I want"



Flat colour: "Once I am happy with the overall contrast of the piece I add a flat colour layer (R253, G71, B156 for example) and change the layer blending mode to Lighten at 100% Opacity"



Layer mask: "I then add a layer mask and start reducing the overall pinkness by painting black. I use a soft-edged brush and set the Opacity to 5% so I really have gentle control over how much of the original greyscale layer shows through"



Separate layers: "When I'm finally happy, I start work on the hair on a separate layer. I've already drawn each major section (hair, face, t-shirt, ice cream) on a separate layer using the Pen tool to keep the edges sharp and to make selections quicker"

Duplicate: "My final tip is to duplicate the original greyscale shading layer and set it to Soft Light to add more contrast. This way of working shaved literally hours off my digital painting"

© Wendy Stephens



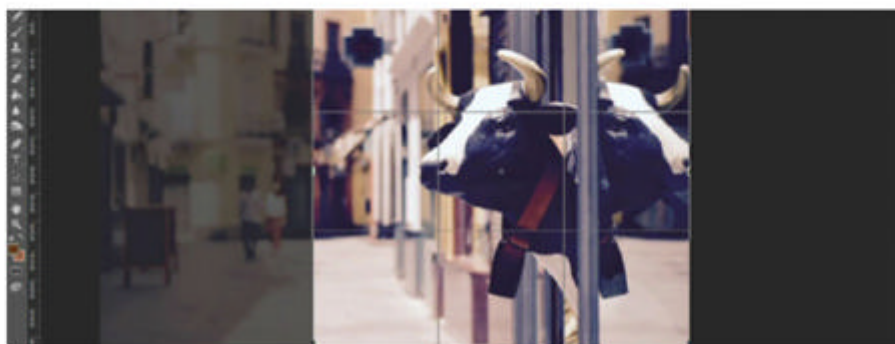
© Adam Spizak

03. USE SAVED SELECTIONS

Illustrator and designer Adam Spizak (www.spizak.com) saves time in his work by making the most of the Save Selection and Load Selection commands within Photoshop, which enable you to create complex selections and save them for use in the future. He explains: "When working with layers it's often very helpful to use selections for more precision. One of the ways to be more efficient with selections is [to use] the functionality to quickly load and save selections in Photoshop. Stored in the Channels palette, saved selections are very powerful yet often overlooked by many users."

After creating a selection you can save it from the main menu – click on Select and choose Save Selection. Make sure the Radio button is clicked on New Selection, then click OK. You can name your selection and even store selections in a separate PSD file for various projects. You can quickly load a selection by navigating once again to the Select menu and choosing Load Selection.

This is an extremely efficient method [especially if you assign] a shortcut via the Edit menu and select Keyboard Shortcuts (Shift+Opt/Alt+Cmd/Ctrl+K). You can also see a list of selections from within the Channels palette and load a selection by Cmd/Ctrl-clicking on the Channels palette icon. Smart management of your selections and channels will save you hours of repeating the same mundane tasks of selecting layers."



04. USE NON-DESTRUCTIVE CROPPING

The Crop tool has been overhauled in the last couple of years and one of the most useful features, is the fact that you can crop your image non-destructively, although this is not the default setting. When you crop your photo, by default the pixels that you get rid of are permanently deleted, which isn't ideal if you want to restore some of the image in the future. However, with the Crop tool

selected, look in the main Tool Options bar at the top of your window. Untick the Delete Cropped Pixels checkbox and the next time that you crop, then removed pixels are saved. If you want to recover your image at any point, then you can go back to the Crop tool and click on your image; you will see the original photo in the crop box so that you can choose how much to bring back.

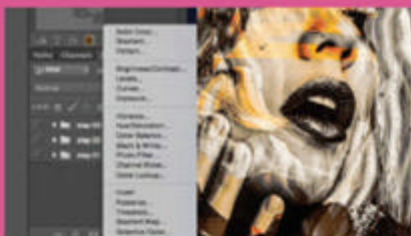
05. FOUR WAYS TO IMPROVE WORKFLOW WITH PHOTOSHOP'S TOOLS

DESIGNER AND ILLUSTRATOR NICOLAS MONIN-BAROILLE (WWW.BEHANCE.NET/UNKNOWNBEING) SHARES HIS INSIDE SECRETS FOR HAVING AN EFFECTIVE WORKFLOW



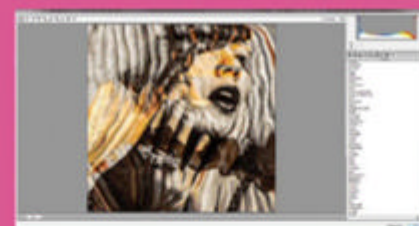
COLOUR YOUR LAYERS

"[It] sounds banal, but colouring Groups and Layers can really help in keeping an organised file. In the long run it also makes sense naming essential layers to find them easily. Colouring Groups helps as you can differentiate between adjustments and additional Details, for example, as with any other element you use in your work. Giving them specific colours – for me adjustments are red and titled as ADJ – in the Layers panel [makes everything easy to locate]."



SHORTCUTS AND CONTEXT MENUS

"It should be [a given for a designer], but I know my shortcuts by heart because I have used them for so long. It cuts an extreme amount of time not having to use the menus. Also make use of the context menus and the buttons in your Layers panel to add things like adjustment layers quickly, without having to go into the main menu."



SAVE PRESETS

"Brushes and actions help a lot, but [in particular] a preset for Adobe's Camera Raw filter is useful. When you're at the end and adding finishing touches, you choose specific options that sometimes take up to ten minutes to do. Then you realise a terrible error in your work and fix it, having to do everything again... Saving a preset in Camera Raw can save that time doing it again and again. Whether it's a simple Sharpness change or Lights/Shadows, Camera Raw offers a lot of things."



THIRD-PARTY APPS

"Try using an app to make screenshot versions of your artwork. I just recently discovered that using an app like Lightshot (<https://app.prntscr.com>) to make previews and fast images for web presentation purposes (1,000px+ but less than 1,700px), takes less time than doing numerous saves in Photoshop and sizing down your work from a big scale. This is the best recent workflow improvement I've experienced."

© Nicolas Monin-Baroille

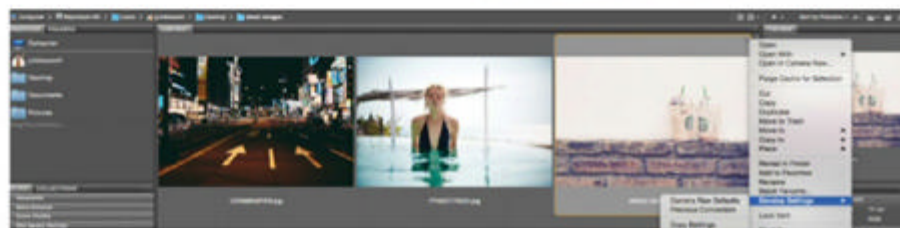
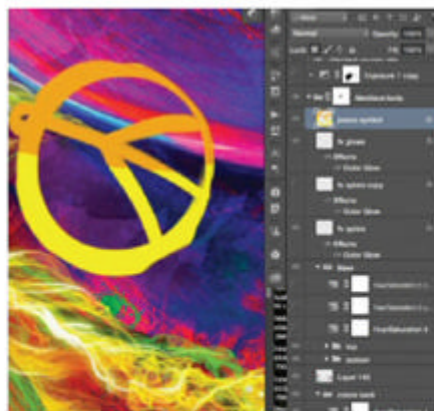
06. CLEAN BACKGROUNDS WITH SURFACE BLUR

Graphic designer Harry Lee (www.harrydlee.com) explains how this handy filter can help quickly retouch product shots for use in commercial projects



07. LOCK THE TRANSPARENCY

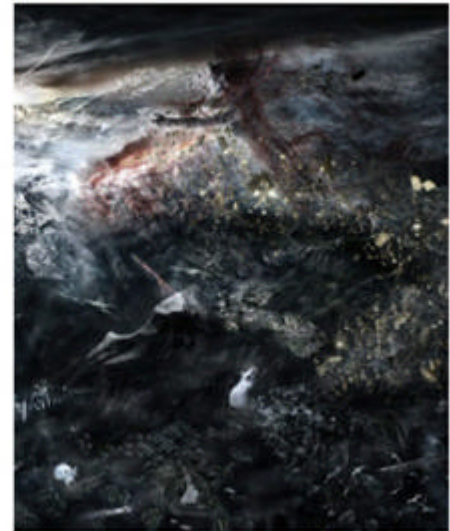
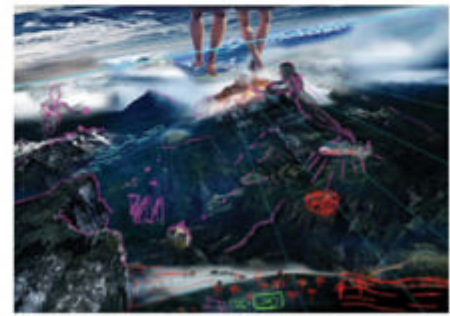
If your work involves digital painting, then you will know how important it is to be precise – one wrong stroke can hamper your workflow and take up valuable time getting right. Graphic illusionist and digital artist Valp, aka Maciej Hajnrch (www.valpnow.com), has this simple solution to the problem, and it's hidden in your Layers palette: "Hit the slash key (/) or click Lock Transparent Pixels" in the Layers palette to speed up your digital-painting process. This simple trick allows you to paint only on the pixels that are on your currently selected layer. First you set up a shape for your layer – this can just be a doodle – and then, by locking transparency, you can add details and be sure not to paint outside of [the] selected layer."



08. COPY CAMERA RAW SETTINGS IN BRIDGE

If you work a lot with RAW files, then you most likely spend a lot of time processing your images in Adobe Camera Raw before you even enter Photoshop. When you open an image from Bridge CC in Adobe Camera Raw, you can make as many tweaks as you like and these are saved back to the file in Bridge. Images that have been processed in ACR have a symbol next to them in Bridge. When

you have your next batch of images, you might want to make the exact same edits in ACR as you did with a previous image. Luckily, you can copy and apply the ACR settings to save time. Ctrl/ right-click on the original image and choose Develop Settings>Copy Settings. Select your new image (or even multiple new images) and do the same, but choose Paste Settings instead.



09. ORGANISE YOUR PROJECTS

As a busy art director and designer, Alexander Otto (www.alexanderotto.com) knows the importance of being organised to create an efficient workflow for his professional work. "With every new update of Photoshop, our lives as designers are made much easier than ever before. For example, with the help of Content-Aware, common tasks are happening almost automatically. If you look at the internet, there are thousands of free ready-to-go templates, mockups and plug-ins that make you produce work even faster," he explains. "But for me, personally, I have noticed the biggest improvement after I organised and approached projects just a little bit differently to usual. It's all about how you manage your time day-to-day and optimise your workflows. Break down your tasks for the day and what you want to accomplish. Then start with working on the biggest problems first.

"For example, compare the sketch/concept version versus the final artwork that I did for Fotolia. In just a few hours I had put together a quick and rough version to see what works best. I played with the general mood and tone, tried many different compositions and thought about basic stuff like perspective and lightning. It's important to distill down your ideas and then bring in elements that help you tell your story. I kept it all rough and dirty in the beginning, so I could easily jump around with ideas and things I wanted to explore."



© Wendy Stephens

10. INCREASE SPEED WITH PLUG-INS

Freelance graphic designer Wendy Stephens (www.darkirisdesign.co.uk) swears by the Painters Wheel plug-in by Len White (<http://lenwhite.com/PaintersWheel/>) to considerably improve her digital painting speed: "I tend to paint in greyscale first and add colour adjustment layers later, so I know the underlying contrast is right. Picking greys using the traditional colour picker in Photoshop can be a bit clumsy.

"In Painters Wheel, the greyscale rectangle at the bottom currently shows four shades. If you click the

little + sign on the left you get five, then click again for six and so on. I also find the Painters Wheel itself invaluable when choosing colour palettes. It just feels more intuitive to me when selecting colours that work well together. Drag the little circle on the outer wheel to change the colour. Then drag the little circle in the centre triangle to change the tone. As you drag, it keeps the original colour in the top left hand triangle, showing the new colour next to it. Brilliant for refining colour choices."

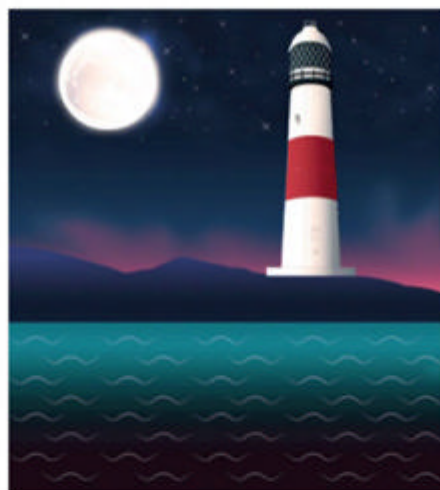
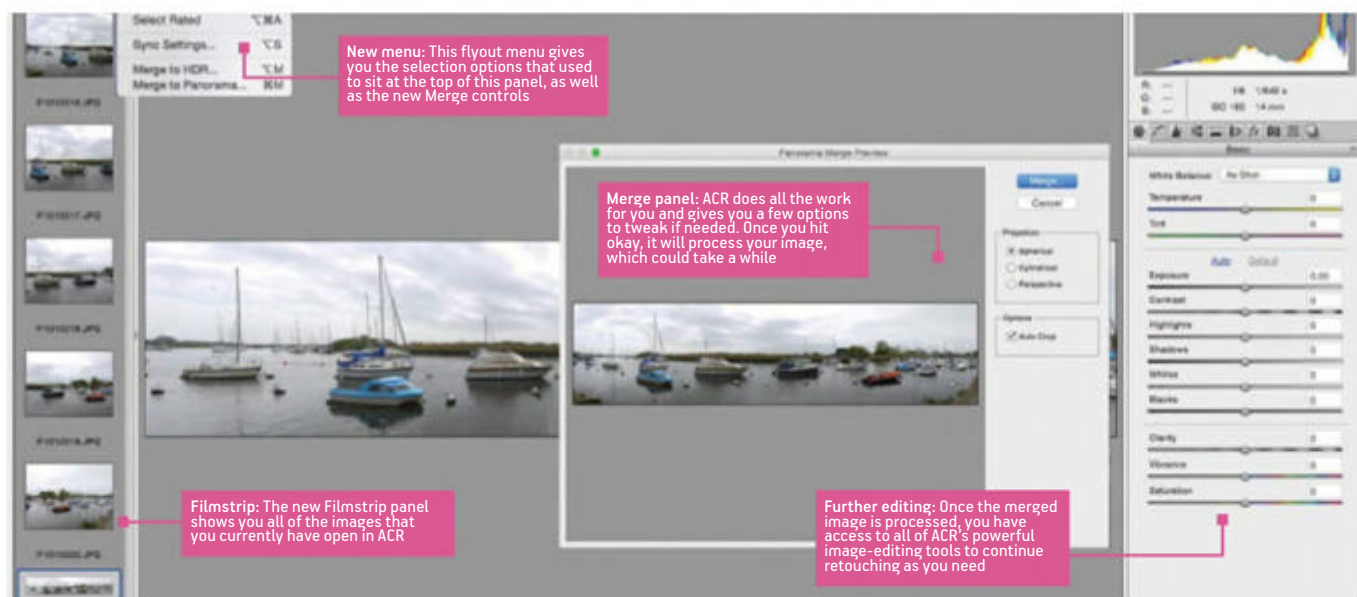
11. DO MORE IN CAMERA RAW

The Camera Raw plug-in in Photoshop CC can often get overlooked, but it is a powerful program in its own right. Rather quietly, it got updated to version nine in April 2015, which doesn't usually happen, as updates come with Photoshop releases. Camera Raw 9 introduces two major new features, which could save you time if you work a lot with photography and it even takes on some of the burden that you usually use Photoshop to manage.

If you open multiple images in Adobe Camera Raw (ACR) 9 (which you can do by selecting the images in Bridge, Ctrl/right-clicking and selecting Open in Camera Raw), then you will see a new Filmstrip view down the left of the screen. There is a little flyout menu at the top, which has the new features: Merge to HDR and Merge to Panorama. Both of these tasks can be done via Photomerge in Photoshop and certainly Photoshop offers more options, but if you need a quick

merge and wish to continue tweaking in ACR, then this is a really powerful addition.

The process is simple; select all the photos that you want to include in the Filmstrip and pick your merge options – ACR does the rest. There are a few customisation options, but they are minimal. However, once the merge is done, you have the full range of ACR tools to tweak the new merged image to suit your needs, before opening in Photoshop.



© Alexander Weaver

12. KEEP COLOURS IN ORDER WITH THE SWATCHES PALETTE

"Whether you're designing for print or web, having your colour swatches and palettes well organised can help speed up your process. Finishing a project can be difficult if you're constantly using your Eyedropper tool or plugging in RGB values," says graphic designer Alexander Weaver (www.behance.net/atweaverdesign). Alexander suggests opening your Swatches palette and viewing all the default swatches. You can delete any swatch by right-clicking on it and choosing Delete Swatch from the pop-out menu, or by dragging a swatch to the trash. Clearing the whole palette means you can start to build up the colours that you need for your projects rather than seeing all of the default colours.

Alexander Weaver goes on to say, "Graphic designers don't have to start from scratch with colour schemes and play around for a length of time with no clear goal. Colour schemes can be created from something as simple as a photograph with a whole range of hues. Often Dribbble, Pinterest, Behance and Greyscalegorilla are a great source of colour palette inspiration for your design.

"Now that you've taken the time to organise your Swatch library and clear your Default palette, maintain the progress that has been made. Organise and name your palettes as you're adding colour swatches. Save your palettes and swatches to your libraries for repeated use in the future."

13. ADJUST A SINGLE COLOUR

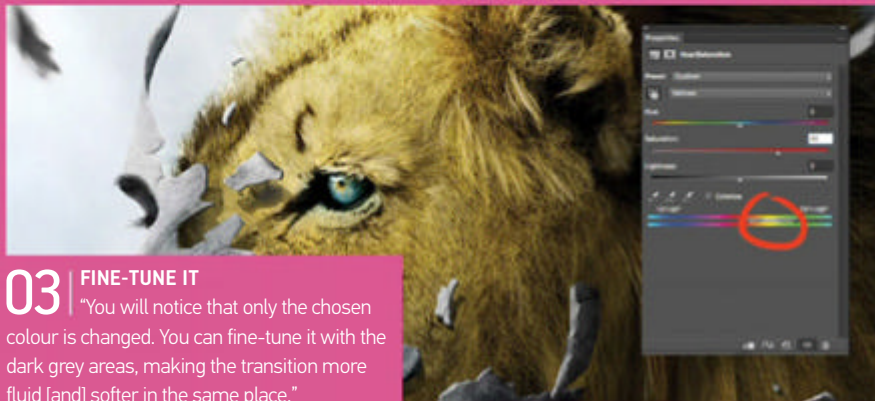
MARTIN GROHS (WWW.MARTINGROHS.DE) USES THE HUE/SATURATION ADJUSTMENT LAYER TO TARGET INDIVIDUAL COLOURS FOR EDITING



01 | ADD AN ADJUSTMENT LAYER
"Here I show you how to change the saturation of one colour in an image. I often use this at the beginning of a painting, but I also use this after the work is done for fine-tuning. Create a New Adjustment Layer>Hue/Saturation."



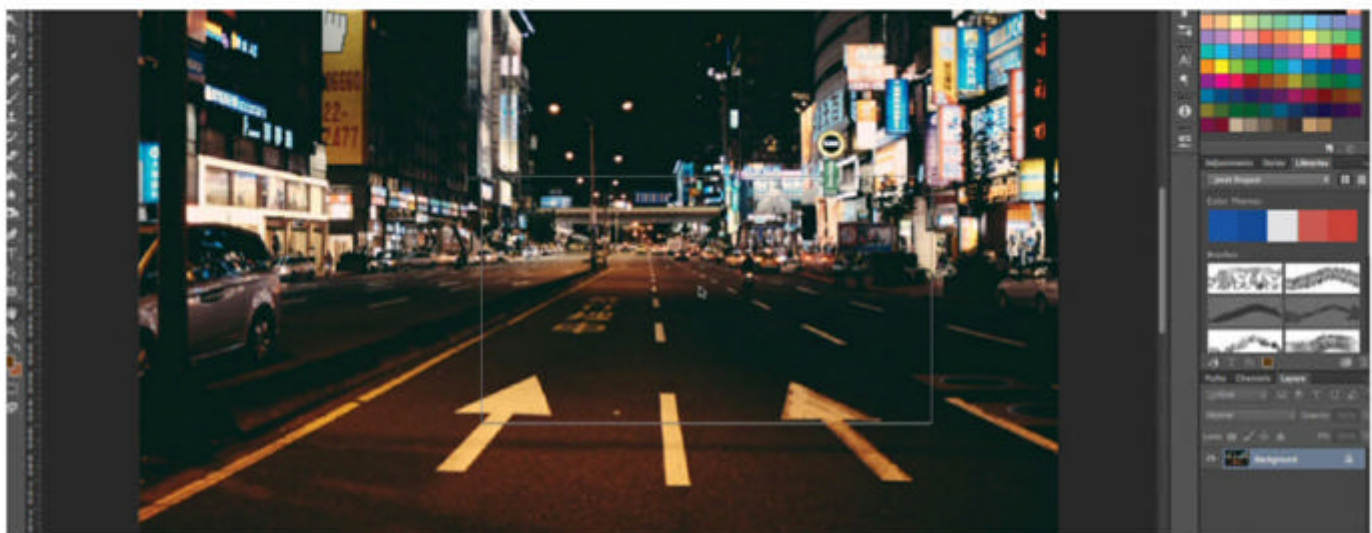
02 | TARGETED ADJUSTMENT
"Select the small Hand tool icon. Click with the mouse over the colour you want to change/adjust. You can see [the cursor change to a] pipette now for you to choose the colour. Click and drag the mouse – while holding down the mouse button – to the left or right to adjust the saturation of this target colour."



03 | FINE-TUNE IT
"You will notice that only the chosen colour is changed. You can fine-tune it with the dark grey areas, making the transition more fluid [and] softer in the same place."



© Martin Grohs



14. MAKE USE OF QUICK VIEW OPTIONS

Not all of us have the luxury of a dual-screen setup, so it can be frustrating when you want to quickly change what you can see in your Photoshop window. Luckily, there are a few tricks that you can use to help you to navigate around your image quickly and simply. Our top

tip is to use the H key. If you are zoomed in on one part of your image, then you hold down H and click with your mouse, the image will fly back out to view the whole image in the window. A box will appear and you can use this to navigate to any other part of the image, where it

will zoom in so you can check the detail here. When you release the H key, you will go back to your original view without having changed position at all – perfect if you need to see a quick element in another part of the image but want to continue working as you were.



15. CREATE MOCKUPS FOR CLIENTS

Sometimes you have to spend a little time going the extra distance to reap the rewards in your future workflow. Brad Marsh is the creative director at South Coast Designs (www.southcoastdesign.co.uk), and he says that a mock up can really help a client understand how a project will look, rather than a flat design: "When you're producing a work of art for a client, simply sending them a high resolution JPEG or PDF simply won't cut it these days. To inspire and catch the attention of the

people paying your wages and putting food on your table (if you're a freelancer like myself) you need to take extra time when putting together your artwork into an organised and well-presented mockup so your clients can get a better understanding as to what their product or design is going to look like as a finished item.

"Take business cards, for example. If you have produced an amazing business card for a client, send them your final designs set up to look like a

stack of business cards on their desk at work. Show them what their business cards will look like when they physically have them in their hands and what their business contacts are going to see when they're handed out at networking events. I have gotten far more referrals and have seen a bigger increase in accepted designs after taking the time to put my designs into an attractive mockup. It also means they make great portfolio pieces too."



16. EDIT 3D FASTER

John Cathcart (www.whitebeardesign.co.uk) creates vibrant and interesting 3D designs, and Photoshop is an important part of his day-to-day workflow and speeds up his common tasks. He talks us through its uses here: "Photoshop has always been a huge player in my digital toolkit. I utilise Photoshop heavily in my current 3D work, using Color and Levels adjustment layers to tweak imported art from Maxon's Cinema 4D. I use a lot of custom-made brushes to add depth and light effects in post-production and always finish my pieces by adding a High Pass filter along with the Overlay blending mode to sharpen the image up.

"I have been working primarily in 3D for the last five years, but could not produce the work that I do without the powerhouse abilities that Photoshop offers. If I'm

working on an extremely detailed render, I will export the UV maps directly to Photoshop where I can get down to detailing every element of my textures, whether it be using the stock brushes and effects provided out-of-the-box or by scanning and photographing my own.

"One of the most crucial tips that I can offer when working in Photoshop is to build your resource library. Get out on the street and take photos, scan textures or even pull them off the web (keeping in mind copyright laws). Also, don't be afraid to experiment with your blending modes, placing multiple layers on top of the other and playing around with blending options, which can produce some very exciting results, adding depth to otherwise two-dimensional work."



17. DON'T WRITE OFF THE MAGIC WAND

Some tools in Photoshop are often consigned to never being used because they have a bad reputation for being unprofessional. However, no tool in Photoshop should be completely disregarded, as they are often designed to complete simple tasks in super-fast time, which can help your workflow when used appropriately. Polly Playford (www.pollyplayford.com) is a freelance graphic designer offering branding, web design, graphic design and more. She uses the Magic Wand tool to make quick selections when needed: "The Magic Wand tool saves time when selecting coloured areas. You must make sure that you adjust the Tolerance in the top menu bar, as that makes a big difference to how useful that tool is. Another handy tip: once you've selected a colour, choose Select>Similar to select the same colour across the whole document."



18. CREATE, MODIFY AND RE-USE SMART OBJECTS

Some tools in Photoshop are there to simply make your life easier, so it pays to know how to use them in your workflow. One of these is Smart Objects, which can be a real timesaver. Graphic designer Michael Wood (www.mwcreativedesign.co.uk) explains how to get the best out of Smart Objects: "Smart Objects are a great way to create content that is re-usable for future projects. Using masks with Smart Objects can allow you to hide parts of

the editable area, without losing control of the Smart Object functionality. This is a really effective way of showing your work on a portfolio, or pitching to clients.

Ctrl/right-click the layer you want to edit and select Convert to Smart Object. With this layer selected, go to Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All, then with the Brush tool selected you can paint out parts of your layer with black and bring parts back with white. After all the hard work is done, you can double-click the Smart Object

layer and replace it with whatever you want! Save and return to original file to see the updated results.

"You can also get nice effects if you duplicate the Smart Object layer and add layer effects such as blur, then mask that layer to edit out the areas you want blurred. Because you have used the same Smart Object layer again, it will update both the original and duplicate when you make edits inside the smart layer! Magic."



19. SAVE EVERYTHING!

If your computer can hack it, then don't be afraid to save all your work, even if you don't think you'll need a particular layer – you never know when you might change your mind. Designer and Illustrator Nicolas Monin-Baroille (www.behance.net/unknownbeing) is a fan of this method: "This requires a lot of space and makes files insanely large sometimes, so be aware this is not recommended for a low-end computer. As I tend to change around a lot of things

or even go back to something I made 20-30 minutes ago, I do not delete a lot of layers. Especially for lightweight work, like my *Fabrics* series, I am left with files in between 100-400MB. It's pretty simple: I put [unnecessary] layers into a Group, even multiple Groups inside other Groups. That way I have copies of nearly every stage of development of the work and can revert or pick out important layers that I may have lost."

© Nicolas Monin-Baroille

20. USE THE RIGHT QUICK SELECTION METHODS

José Paulo Reis (www.zepaulocreation.blogspot.co.uk) says that the best way to speed up a typical photomanipulation or photo-editing workflow, is to know which selection technique is right in each situation. He uses mainly three tools in his work:



Color Range: "To quickly select a specific part of an image that is mostly one colour, I simply go to Select>Color Range and pick the color I want to select. I usually use this to select skies"



Quick Selection tool: "I often use this when I don't need a lot of precision in my selection. It's a quick and simple way to select a certain area of the image. It's a great tool!"

Shift+F6: "This is not exactly a selection technique, but a selection modifier. Once you have your selection ready, you may need to tweak some details to make it more natural. By simply clicking Shift+F6, I can feather my selection according to each situation, instead of going to the menu, which saves me a lot of time"

© José Paulo Reis

21. QUICKLY MODIFY ARTWORK WITH TRANSFORM, LIQUIFY AND WARP TOOLS

FREELANCE ARTIST RYAHDC CASSIEM (www.riyahdc.wix.com/riyahd) SHOWS US HOW HE MODIFIES CHARACTER POSES AND PROPORTIONS IN HIS WORKFLOW



THE CONCEPT

"This concept design is part of a personal project exploring mecha design through the female form. I used a combination of photo compositing and digital painting techniques to create the design. Here I will go through some tips for modifying character pose and proportions using the various Transform tools and filters. My main focus is to capture a readable pose to the character design."



THE WARP TOOL

"I use the Liquify, Transform, Warp and Puppet Warp tools to modify the pose and proportions of my character design. The combination of these tools helps to speed up workflow by spending less time re-creating certain elements. To transform a layer I press Cmd/Ctrl+T to activate the layer's Transform mode. I [then] Ctrl/right-click on the layer, then select the Warp option in the drop-down menu. I warp the image by moving sections and the borders of the image around to accommodate the pose."



LIQUIFY TOOL

"I press Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+X as a shortcut to activate the Liquify filter. I then tweak the proportions of the character with the Move brush, modifying the shapes of the design. I also use the Twirl Liquify with a large brush size placed at the centre of the joints to tweak some angles to the pose."



PUPPET WARP TOOL

"I use the Puppet Warp tool for more control when modifying the pose of the character. I create a selection with a Lasso tool to isolate a part of the design. I then select the Puppet Warp function in the Edit menu to create a temporary mesh from the selection. I place pins to allocate joint orientations, to help when posing a specific part of the design. Then start to pose the character by moving the pins into place accordingly."

© RYAHDC Cassiem



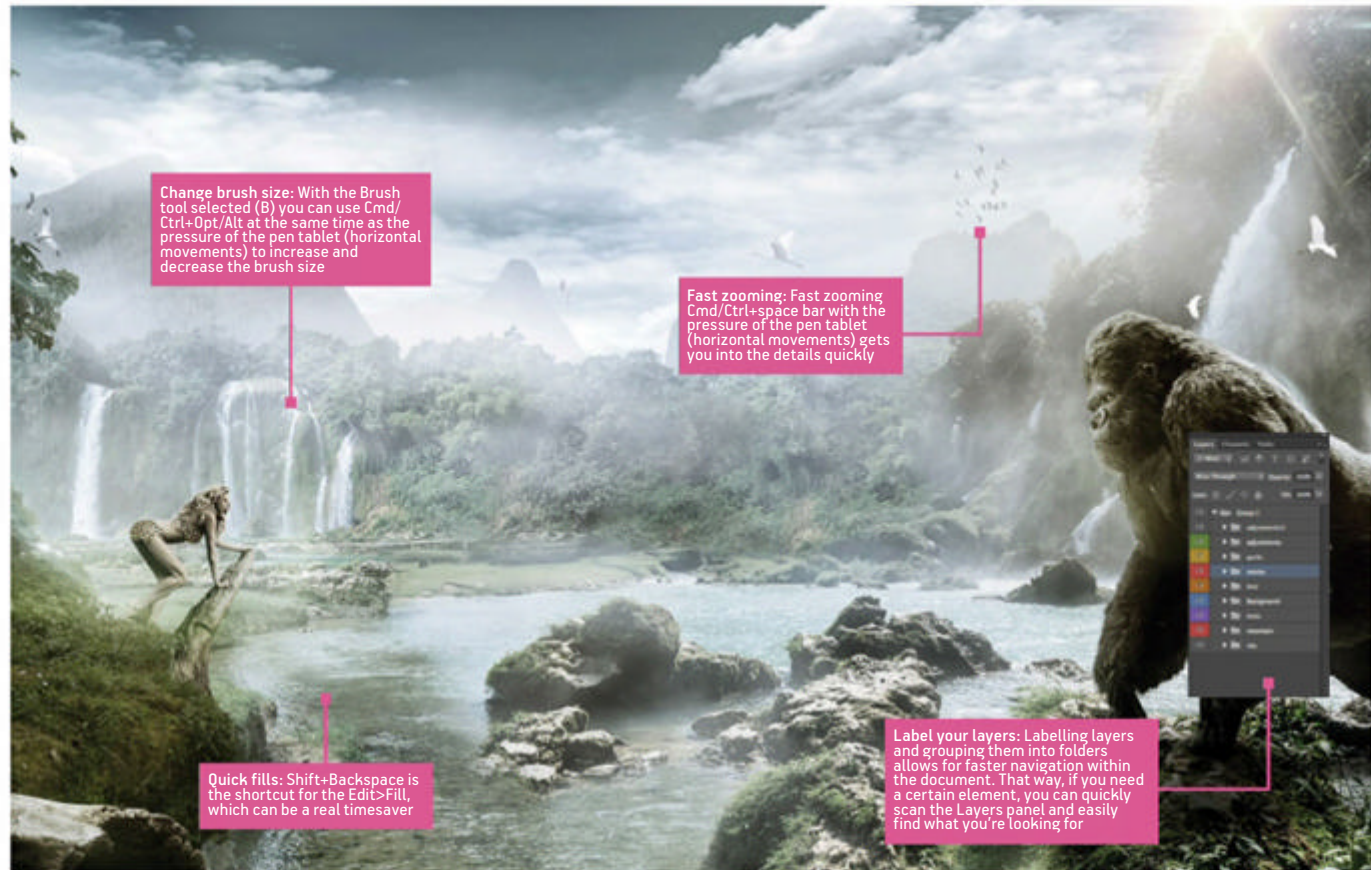
22. USE ADVANCED COLOR RANGE SETTINGS FOR SKINTONE SELECTIONS

If you work a lot at retouching portrait or beauty images, then it is likely that you will need to make adjustments to the model's skin – whether giving it a subtle glow or smoothing it. It is quicker if you can treat all of the skin at the same time, but selecting the skin in the first place can be more time-consuming. The Color Range tool is the perfect tool for this job, as it is designed to recognise skintones and help you make an accurate selection. Open your image in Photoshop and then go to Select>Color Range. From the Select drop-down window, choose Skin Tones. This will now give you the option to Detect Faces if you wish. The tool should have already picked up skin tones in the image, but you can tweak them with the Fuzziness slider. You can use the Selection Preview option to view your selection on your main document for a better view, and you can also use Save to save your preset for future use.

23. SPEEDY SHORTCUTS

BEING ORGANISED AND USING SHORTCUTS ARE THE BEST WAYS YOU CAN IMPROVE YOUR WORKFLOW.

JOSÉ PAULO REIS (WWW.ZEPAULOCREATION.BLOGSPOT.CO.UK) TALKS US THROUGH HIS KEY POINTS



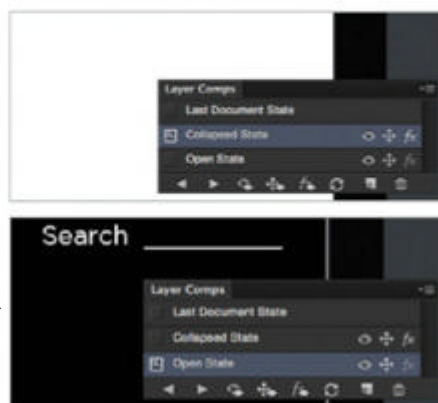
© José Paulo Reis

24. USE LAYER COMPS

Visual designer Edmond Yang (www.edmondyang.com) swears by the Layer Comps panel to speed up his workflow for his interaction designs: "Instead of creating different layer groups, or even different PSD files for different versions of your interaction designs, you can set multiple states within one single file using the Layer Comps panel. I basically tell Photoshop which layers I want to be visible or not and this tool can be very powerful and save you a lot of time.

"Let's say that in your design you have two states, one with a collapsed menu and one with an opened

menu. Now, hide all your collapsed-related items and create an opened menu state. Find your Layer Comps palette from the Window menu, hit the Create New Layer Comp button at the bottom and name this 'Open state'. Next, create your collapsed state by hiding your opened items, bring up your Layer Comps palette and hit the same button again, naming it 'Collapsed state'. Now you have two states you can switch between by using the icon to the left of your layer comps. Remember to hit the Update Layer Comp icon if you are moving or changing anything within a layer composition."



© Edmond Yang

25. CUSTOMISE YOUR WORKFLOW WITH PREFERENCES AND ACTIONS

It's not very exciting, but by spending some admin time in Photoshop, setting everything up in a way that works for you, you will significantly cut your workflow time, so you can concentrate on being creative instead. For a start, don't be afraid to play with your Preferences. By default, Photoshop is set to use 60 per cent of your computer's RAM (Photoshop>Preferences>Performance). You can try upping the Memory Usage to help Photoshop run faster – start with small increments

and see how it affects your work. Next, set up custom shortcuts (Edit>Keyboard Shortcuts) for the tools that you use the most, as this will save you time hunting things down. Build your own Workspaces and save them (Window> Workspaces) so that you have a setup for every main task that you undertake. Create actions for common tasks and turn them into Droplets for easy access. There are plenty more ways you can customise your Photoshop experience, so start experimenting!



MAX MAD POSTER COMPETITION

POSTER
CHALLENGE
WINNER

TO CELEBRATE THE CINEMA RELEASE OF *MAD MAX: FURY ROAD*, OUR SISTER MAGAZINE *PHOTOSHOP CREATIVE* TEAMED UP WITH WARNER BROS. PICTURES AND MCM COMIC CON TO CHALLENGE YOU TO CREATE A POSTER FOR THE FILM

Hand-picked by the director himself, and chosen from over 50 entries, the winning poster was created by Adam Davison, and was displayed at the UK's largest MCM Comic Con in London on 22-24 May 2015. Davison won tickets for two to Comic Con plus an overnight stay in London for him and a guest to enjoy the convention, where his winning artwork was displayed.

The film's director, George Miller, selected the artwork as the winning poster for being the most arresting and original. Head to <http://bit.ly/1F3qJmD> to see all of the posters entered into the competition.

ADAM DAVISON

"Inspiration for the design came from director George Miller describing the film as a 'western on wheels'. The final art developed from there. I wanted the image to resemble an old western movie poster and I had this idea of a car flying through the air, almost towards the viewer, trying to get away from the bad guys. It was a nice surprise to be chosen as the winner. Thanks go to *Photoshop Creative*, Warner Bros. Pictures and MCM Comic Con for the opportunity, and George Miller for choosing my design."



**MAD MAX
FURY ROAD**

CASTING: TOM ROBERT CHARLES THORNTON MICHAEL ROBERT WARD JILL BARNETT AND ROSE HARTWIGSON MONTGOMERY
WRITTEN BY: GEORGE MILLER BASED UPON A STORY BY: GEORGE MILLER PRODUCED BY: GUY WILSON BASED UPON THE FILM BY: GEORGE MILLER



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Compact but not lacking: The compact Epson hosts a huge array of features in its small stature

EPSON EXPRESSION PHOTO XP-860

EPSON'S LATEST COMPACT PRINTER PACKS AN INCREDIBLE ARRAY OF FEATURES AND A BEAUTIFUL DESIGN. BUT IS IT REALLY AS HIGH-QUALITY AS IT LOOKS?

www.epson.co.uk

£250
\$300

As technology gallops onwards, the world is focusing more and more on the internet. That's true of artists these days who are more likely to pick up a stylus than a paintbrush, but also of the modern-day photographer who is more likely to spend their time in Photoshop than in the darkroom.

Photoshop users are more likely to share their work online than they are to print it out, but that doesn't mean that there aren't some fantastic printers on the market at the moment. They have to be good too: printers will get left behind if they don't keep up with the evolution of technology, so these days, you're likely to see smaller printers, more

SPECIFICATIONS:

- Windows, Mac, various mobile devices, SD card
- Printing resolution: 5,760 x 1,440 DPI
- Wireless enabled

advanced scanning resolutions, Wi-Fi connections, and in the case of the Epson Expression Photo XP-860, the ability to scan and print straight to and from Facebook.

The XP-860 also looks and feels extremely modern and very stylish. The sleek, black casing hides the paper tray, which can be opened by flipping up the lid of the machine, and the scanner is easily hidden on a separate layer.

Adding to its modern features and look, the Epson weighs less than ten kilograms. It's a space-saver, but as with so many small printers, does the size compromise the more ambitious capabilities of the XP-860?

Scanning abilities: The stylish design hides the high-quality scanner





Quality imagery: The printer produces high quality images with near perfect colour in just twenty-seconds

“It’s built for convenience too: photographers can plug their SD cards straight into the printer, and iOS and Google device users can print with AirPlay and Google Cloud Print respectively”

Glossy, compact and featuring a touchscreen LCD display, the Epson Expression Photo XP-860 certainly looks the business, but it also matches its impressive look with incredible print quality. It prints with six inks – standard CMYK with added light magenta and light cyan – which means that if you’re an artist or designer looking to capture the subtlest colours in your work, the XP-860 is more than capable. The print resolution of 5760x1440 dpi means that sharpness isn’t compromised either.

The printer produces high quality images in just 20 seconds. This excellence is only to be expected from an Epson printer, and the XP-860 handily has all the necessary requirements to also make it great for office life: it can print straight onto discs, it can fax, and it can even print double-sided.

Interestingly though, the major inconveniences of the XP-860 for someone buying one for the office, aren’t necessarily a big deal for an artist or designer. Six ink cartridges means a higher cost per page,

and the paper tray – as well as being somewhat fiddly to manoeuvre – holds only 100 sheets of paper; the top feeder on the printer (built for higher quality paper) can hold around 20. While you may find yourself restocking the printer more regularly than you’d like in an office, a designer will probably print slightly less often. Not to mention that there’s more justification for the latter, when it comes to purchasing a printer that’s expensive to run, but unbeatable in colour quality.



As a designer's printer, it's easy to see how the XP-860 fits into a studio, or even a bedroom. It's a handy size, and it looks fantastic, from an outwards-sliding display panel when you're using the machine, to the LCD screen itself. It's built for convenience too: photographers can plug their SD cards straight into the printer, and iOS and Google device users can print with AirPlay and Google Cloud Print respectively.

But it's as much about the substance as the style: the XP-860 is immensely powerful, thanks in part to the cartridge set-up. It's relatively quiet, it's quick, and the only drawback about the actual printer itself is that it's difficult to get the paper tray in and out. It's probably the only time that the XP-860 feels like it could do with being a little more spacious.

The only other factor that may detract from the beauty and power of this printer, is the price. Running six ink cartridges might be the cost of quality, but a £250 price tag might put you off investing in one.

MULTIPACK 6-COLOURS 24XL CLARIA PHOTO HD INK



At £77, you might be put off from purchasing such a large quantity of ink in one go, such as the Multipack 6-Colours 24XL Claria Photo HD ink. Epson claims that the XL packs can save you up to 25%, so it may seem like the sensible option, but is it really worth it?

If you're looking to put the impressive six-ink printing capabilities of the XP-860 to work, then this pack of cartridges is perhaps the best place to start; it's recommended by Epson themselves who claim "photos printed with Claria Photo HD Ink will last up to 300 years in a photo album." While it's hard to argue with that particular boast, the fact is that Claria ink is far superior to most of its competitors, and not just because it's been developed specifically to print from Epson printers, but because it delivers smooth, glossy results, and the extra two colours allow for greater precision when it comes to light shades, as well as a better overall print. Claria ink is a great luxury should you wish to splash out.

Take the 300-dpi scanner into consideration though, and you have not just a printer, but a hub for connecting real world art with the digital. If you're going to spend that amount of money on top drawer printer, you can't get much more for your money than with the XP-860. It's an impressive printer for its size, and one that's certainly keeping up with technology.

VERDICT

Features: **9/10**
Ease of use: **9/10**
Quality of results: **9/10**
Value for money: **6/10**

FINAL SCORE: 9/10

OTHER OPTIONS ON THE MARKET:



EPSON EXPRESSION PHOTO XP-820 PRINTER

£200

The XP-820 is almost a smaller sibling to the XP-860. It's very similar in style and build – they both measure and weigh exactly the same amount – only it's not designed specifically for photo printing, like the XP-860: it only has five inks and not six. For £50 less, the XP-820 might seem like a stepping stone option for anyone looking to try out a good quality printer before moving onto a better one.



CANON SELPHY CP910 COMPACT PHOTO PRINTER

£82

More designed for Instagram than photography, the SELPHY is a postcard-sized competitor to the Epson XP series. It doubles up as its own Wi-Fi port, has its own app for ease of printing, and creates top-quality prints: it's also significantly smaller in stature than the XP printers, and quite a lot cheaper too.



HP OFFICEJET 150

£300

Sleek, small and extremely powerful, the Officejet 150 is a printer/scanner combo that's designed to be used on the go. The Officejet is, as the name may imply, an inkjet printer that's comfortable in colour and monochrome. The only drawbacks from its extremely impressive features are that it doesn't have integrated Airplay and it can't print double-sided.

TEXTURE EXPORTER PRO

HAVE FULL CONTROL OVER YOUR TEXTURES LIKE NEVER BEFORE, USING UNORTHODOX ENTERTAINMENT'S LATEST ADD-ON

www.unorthodoxentertainment.com

PLATFORMS:

- Mac and PC
- Photoshop CS5 and above

\$30

£20 (APPROX)

Textures give your work limitless possibilities in Photoshop and are an integral part of most digital artists' workflow. They inject a true realness into your pictures and 3D models, whether you're adding a canvas to a digital painting or using displacement maps, so it's important to get the best out of them and use them wisely.

While there are lots of programs, websites and tutorials explaining how to create your own textures, there isn't as much help for actually managing them. Unorthodox Entertainment's Texture Exporter though, as the name suggests, is one such piece of software that promises to cut the amount of time you spend exporting textures,

as well as making it a simple and user-friendly process. It is an extremely perceptive Photoshop plug-in that gives the user an easy-to-use, customisable and efficient way to manage and export their texture maps.

Texture Exporter works similarly to an action. It's a simple tool designed for enhancing your workflow, and it even comes with added tutorials that you can watch by clicking on the Unorthodox Entertainment logo.

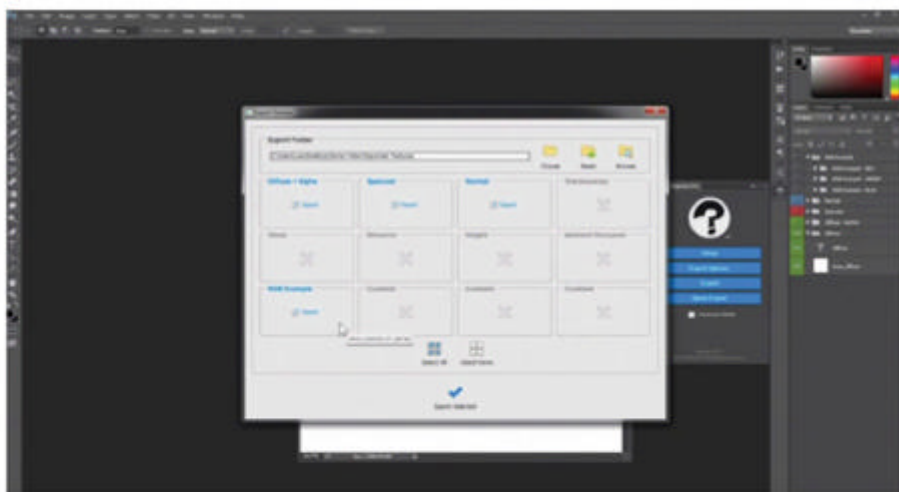
Begin by going to Setup, choosing your desired resolution and then Create Texture Groups. Texture Exporter offers eight different group types – Diffuse, Specular, Normal, Translucency, Gloss, Emissive, Height and Ambient Occlusion, plus four custom options – so simply check the ones you want to add to your project, and start from there. It couldn't be any more user-friendly, especially for the average digital artist: the plug-in only consists of four menu options, and it's the simplicity that's perhaps the selling point of the software.

On from there, the Exporter Options are also extremely simple. It feels rather like a natural extension suited to Photoshop; you can choose file type, whether you want to resize the texture – a bit like the Save For Web Devices tool – and any changes you make get stored in your PSD

“Promises to cut the amount of time you spend exporting textures, as well as making it a simple and user-friendly process”

EXPORT TEXTURES

CHOOSE FROM A RANGE OF GROUPS TO EXPORT YOUR TEXTURES TO



GLOBAL DEFAULTS

Set global defaults for your files to save even more time during exporting. There are four custom group settings.



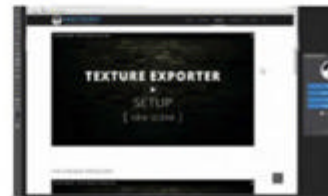
EXPORT OPTIONS

Go in-depth with every possible option for exporting your textures, in the specific Export Options button on the menu. Only your visible groups show up in this layer, which makes customising easier, and you can add specific suffixes to your file names to go even further in-depth, and organise things automatically.



CREATE TEXTURE GROUPS

Creating texture groups is where it all begins in Texture Exporter. You can choose to create alpha groups, and even RGB groups with four additional custom texture groups. You can then start exporting with the other options. Name your custom groups too, to manage everything about your textures, and avoid confusion.



TUTORIALS

Another great little extra from Unorthodox Entertainment is that Texture Exporter provides tutorials to help with your use of the program. Simply click the question mark logo, and Texture Exporter will load your web browser, and assist you with YouTube tutorials relating to how to use the add-on.



Exported texture: Once a texture has been exported you can use it in your Photoshop images

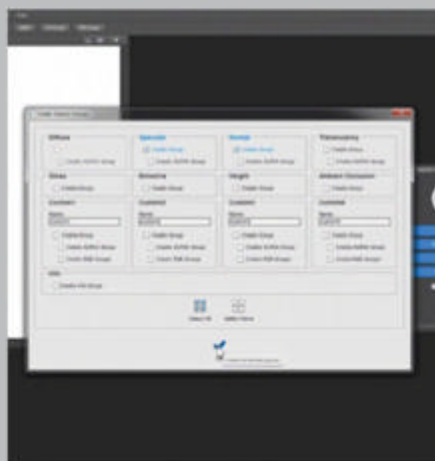
■ SETUP A NEW SCENE

GET TO WORK ON THE BASICS OF TEXTURE EXPORTER BY SETTING UP THE PROGRAM



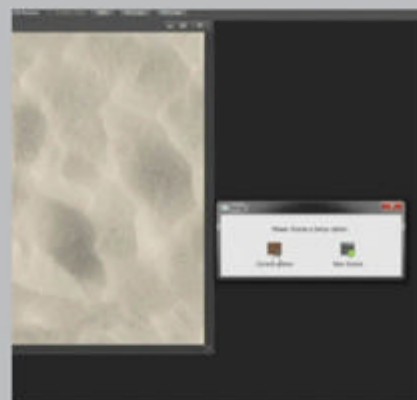
01 | SET IT UP

First off, go to Setup on the blue menu of Texture Exporter, which when added to Photoshop, can be found down the right-hand side of the program. This menu's similar to the New Document one in Photoshop: choose your dimensions and the Colour Bit depth you want to go for, and click OK.



02 | CREATE TEXTURE GROUPS

This is the part of the program that lets you choose exactly what groups you want for your texture. There are Select All and Select None buttons, as well as the option to pick from the original eight groups, and four custom ones.



03 | SET UP EXISTING SCENE

If you have a texture open that you'd like to export, rather than starting from scratch with one, Texture Exporter can still help just as easily. Go to Setup as you would as usual, but make sure to select the Current Scene, rather than creating a new one. This will apply your groups to your current texture.

file. Export is an extremely speedy process that offers you the option to view the file folder after exporting, and if that's not fast enough, Quick Export exports a texture group with any sub-layer or group selected. The one-click, artist friendly export process helps to eliminate any errors without compromising any control. The option to export multiple texture groups all at once is another great feature.

It's not a particularly flashy program, but Texture Exporter Pro is a great time-saver, and well worth \$30, especially if you're someone who relies on textures a lot in your work. There is an Indie version

of the software too, which is just \$15, but it omits the ability to edit script files, along with some of the error-checking and organisational capabilities. The Pro version comes with a commercial license and no pop-up delay or texture map size limitations on export. A further nice touch from Unorthodox Entertainment's Texture Exporter, is that you get free updates for life.

It might not boast a wealth of features, but that doesn't make it any less powerful. Texture Exporter does exactly what it was designed for, and does that extremely well. It will benefit any artist greatly as it will help to streamline their workflow.

VERDICT

Features: **7/10**

Ease of use: **8/10**

Quality of results: **9/10**

Value for money: **8/10**

FINAL SCORE: 8/10

A neat tool for anyone who wants to export textures quickly and cleanly, Texture Exporter is a must-have add-on for 3D users

DREAMING OF DROIDS

DISCOVER WHAT FIRES UP THE IMAGINATION
OF CONCEPT ARTIST RIYAHDCASSIEM

An early love of sci-fi inspired South African Riyahd Cassiem to become a concept artist. We caught up with him to discover how Photoshop has helped him on his creative journey, and how his style and approach has changed and developed throughout his career so far.

WHERE DID YOUR LOVE OF SCI-FI COME FROM?

I immersed myself in art, film, and books at an early age. I was constantly drawing and exploring different mediums, from pencil and paper to painting on canvas. With support of my mother and influence from my father, I was introduced to science fiction and fantasy authors such as Jules Verne, Arthur C Clark and Edgar Rice Burroughs. My fascination grew with the art and

visual effects in the films like *Aliens*, *Predator* and *Blade Runner*, as well as well as graphic novels like *Heavy Metal*, *2000 AD*, *X-Men*, *Spawn*, and *Batman*. I was then committed to [the] idea of learning as much as I could about the production process of creating characters and environments, to be able to one day create my own theme and graphic concepts.

WHAT'S A TYPICAL WORK DAY FOR YOU?

I work as a independent freelance digital artist doing visual effects, motion graphics, digital sculpting, illustration and concept art. I usually work at night, I spend the first hour or so working out what work needs to be done, checking messages, re-evaluating previous work and so on. I then break down the work into



OUR READER
RIYAHDCASSIEM

www.riyahdc.wix.com/riyahd
@Riyahd_Cassiem



Amiya: "Have a solid foundation in the fundamental principles of art and design," if you want to make it as a digital artist, advises Cassiem



Aurielia: "Life drawing, anatomy, composition, form, tone, texture and colour," are all important, adds Cassiem. "Try to learn how to emulate how light affects shapes and different materials. There is a lot to be learned by studying the Old Masters for fundamentals"

All article images © Riyahd Cassiem



Security droid: "The industry does require you to have a thick skin, and being able to learn from your mistakes," is crucial, says Cassiem

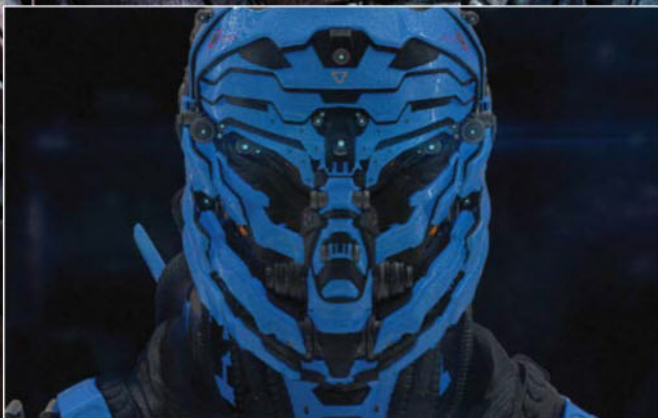


“ I have followed my childhood passion of wanting to create sci-fi and fantasy art, creating environments, characters, creatures and robots ”



“I constantly sketch in my sketchbooks between working digitally and often let those sketches inspire the digital workflow and vice versa. I find working in digital allows for a kind of creative freedom to explore different ideas and techniques”

Ngage: “Always be open to explore new tools and techniques, mixing the different tools and techniques creates a more unique approach for creating designs,” says Cassiem, who mixes 3D apps with Photoshop to good effect



THEN AND NOW

"My favourite image right now is my recent Sentient artwork I created of a meditating female mech," says Cassiem. "It is part of a personal project about sentient machines finding a spiritual connection (inspired by *Ghost in the Shell*), while trying to explore design forms of the human body with a mech design influence.



I also use this image as my current desktop wallpaper and look at it when I am feeling stressed or uninspired to remind me to just breathe and meditate on what I'm doing." Senika is one of Cassiem's earlier works, and it demonstrates that the most challenging part of his career was "that transition phase from

traditional to digital, trying to emulate the traditional look digitally, where now I have accepted and embraced the look of digital and how varied it can be. I am constantly trying to evolve my workflow with the technology while still retaining my passion for traditional art and principles."



segmented tasks and dedicate the time to the specific tasks, or I just go with the flow and act on inspiration. Most of these images were created with no specific brief from any source, but were a collection of my current moods and state of mind over the last few years. I drew the images from experience in my day-to-day life, whether it be from my environment or partially subconscious thoughts. I have followed my childhood passion of wanting to create sci-fi and fantasy art, creating environments, characters, creatures and robots. It's that passion that's gotten me where I am and it's the passion that drives me forward into the future. The feeling of wanting to create

something and trying to create it keeps me going.

WHEN DID YOU START USING PHOTOSHOP?

I first started experimenting in Photoshop with a mouse I think in 2004, trying to transition from traditional to digital using a comic book approach of scanning an artwork then using Photoshop for digital colouring. It soon became apparent that I needed a stylus to paint digitally. At the same time I started experimenting with different applications like Maya, After Effects and later Zbrush and Keyshot, which I now incorporate into my current workflows depending on the project I am working on.

WHEN DID YOU BEGIN WORKING AS A PRO?

I got my first job after finishing Midrand Graduate Institute. I got a bursary from a graphic design agency, which required me to work at a studio for a few months before getting a position as a VFX artist at a film and commercial production company, where I was doing storyboards, design, concept art, matte painting, motion graphics and visual effects and learning the different visual production processes.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PHOTOSHOP TOOL?

My favourite tools are the Brush tools in Photoshop for digital painting and the adjustment layers to adjust various colours and values to the image accordingly. I also use the layer blending modes extensively for different overlay effects. Another favourite of mine is some of the image manipulation tools like Liquify, Puppet Warp, Content Aware and Transform Warp.

WHAT DOES YOUR WORKFLOW INVOLVE?

I still have a passion and appreciation for traditional art and mediums, from the Old Master painters and sculptors. I constantly sketch in my sketchbooks between working digitally and often let those sketches inspire the digital workflow and vice versa. I find working in digital allows for a kind of creative freedom to explore different ideas and techniques. Being able to create a relatively detailed concept in a short period of time, with the ability to do variations, adding motion and working in 3D space, to viewing the design in the real world as a 3D print, creates an added dimension to my creative workflow, with different possible outcomes.



A close-up photograph of watercolor painting supplies. In the foreground, a white watercolor palette is open, showing various colors of paint, some of which have been mixed and applied. A wooden-handled brush with dark bristles lies across the palette. To the right, a clear glass filled with water sits next to a white bottle of masking fluid with a black cap. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

GATHER THE PROJECT MATERIALS

ESSENTIAL RESOURCES FOR WATERCOLOUR TEXTURES AND BRUSHES

Paper: You'll need paper specifically for watercolour. It's strong and has a texture that absorbs the water and won't crinkle

Masking fluid: Apply it to areas of the paper before painting it. Once it's dry you can paint over it then remove it, leaving clean paper

Brush: You'll need a brush specifically for watercolours. It holds more water than regular paintbrushes and spreads paint evenly

Paint: Watercolour paints come in a variety of colours and prices. Even affordable paints will work for this tutorial

CREATE YOUR OWN CUSTOM WATERCOLOURS

LEARN HOW TO MAKE WATERCOLOUR BRUSHES FOR TRADITIONAL ART EFFECTS

Watercolour art has been around for centuries. It is characterised by transparent colour that can be layered when dry or blended while wet. Watercolour is considered the medium used in Palaeolithic cave paintings. It was a prominent medium during the Renaissance for studies and

sketches before larger paintings in other mediums. Today, the unpredictability and vibrancy of the paints make it fun for both children and adults. But it is also useful for designers.

Watercolour brushes and textures can add a splash of colour, and rich texture that gives a handmade effect to digital projects. Also, this project

is pretty cheap; once you have the supplies you can make hundreds of brushes, textures and designs to fit all of your design project needs. It's also relatively simple and a great way to incorporate other mediums in your work. Using watercolour in design provides a unique opportunity to blur the lines of digital and traditional in a classy and elegant way.

BASIC WATERCOLOUR WASHES

HOW TO CREATE BASIC WASHES FOR USE AS BRUSHES



01 | LOAD UP YOUR PAINTBRUSH
Load your brush with the colour of your choice. Use a colour that is dark enough to scan well with enough contrast. Avoid yellow. Experiment with the colours to make sure you have the right water to colour ratio for a smooth effect.



02 | UNLEASH YOUR INNER ARTIST
Paint spots of colour all over your paper. Experiment with size, amount of water, drips, splatters, and a drier brush. You may need to tape the paper to a board to prevent warping.



03 | CAPTURE YOUR ART
Wait for the paint to dry completely. Then either photograph or scan them for use in Photoshop. Make sure the spots you've painted don't bleed into each other if they move during the drying process.

WATERCOLOUR WASHES WITH MASKING FLUID

USING MASKING FLUID TO CREATE UNIQUE DESIGNS



01 | APPLY THE MASKING FLUID
Using a cheap brush, paint the masking fluid on the paper however you want. Remember that wherever you paint the masking fluid will be white after you paint with watercolour over it. Make sure to let it dry completely before painting.



02 | PAINT WITH THE WATERCOLOURS
Once the fluid is dry, use the watercolour to paint over the areas you want. Don't worry about painting on the masking fluid, that's why it's there. Allow the paint to dry completely before the next step.




03 | PEEL THE MASKING FLUID OFF
Once the paint is dry, peel the masking fluid off. Just rub it with your finger until it peels off, be careful that you don't rip the paper off as well. Then photograph or scan your new designs.

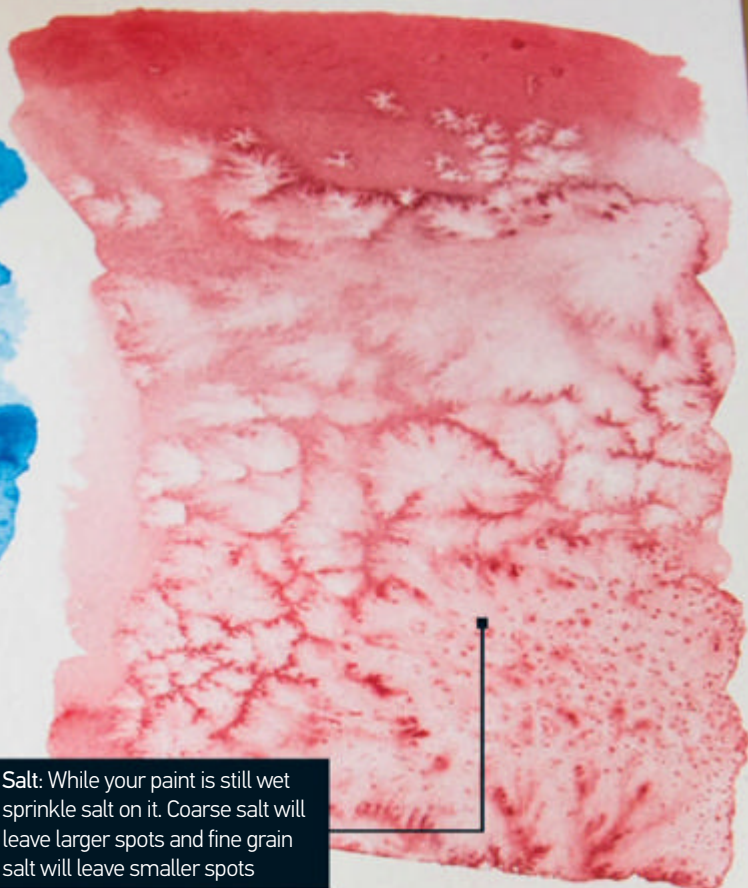
■ WATERCOLOUR TECHNIQUES

FOUR WAYS TO MAKE WATERCOLOUR MORE INTERESTING


By combining standard watercolours with household ingredients, you can create fun new effects for your brushes and textures. Here I am going to be using alcohol, salt, plastic wrap, and multiple watercolour colours.




Alcohol: While your paint is still wet, drip small drops of isopropyl alcohol into the paint. The paint will spread away from it and create interesting ring patterns



Salt: While your paint is still wet sprinkle salt on it. Coarse salt will leave larger spots and fine grain salt will leave smaller spots



Plastic Wrap: While your paint is wet, crumple some plastic wrap and lay it over top of the paint. Let the paint dry before removing it for a cool rock-like texture



Colour Dropping: Drop one colour of paint into another colour while the paint is still wet; try with multiple colours and different size drops

DIGITAL WATERCOLOUR

CREATE TRADITIONAL WATERCOLOUR EFFECTS WITH OUR DIGITAL BRUSHES

Creating traditional watercolour effects is something that is usually reserved for painting with practical materials only. Digital mediums struggle to simulate the fluid movements of the liquid and the results often lack the familiar appearance of traditional watercolours. But using the classic watercolour strokes to create

digital brushes can bridge this divide to help you to create realistic paintings.

The proper technique doesn't use the brushes as one might normally expect. Dragging the cursor will not provide good results. It's all about the single clicks, so the brushes are used more like a stamp than a brush. Blending modes play

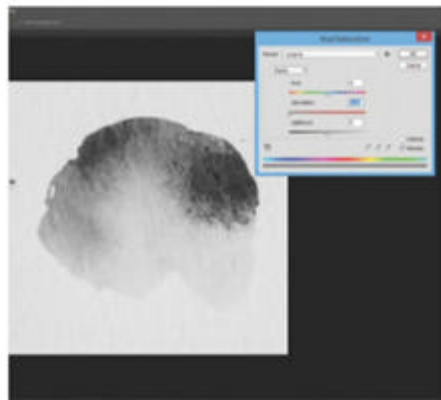
another major factor in creating the effect, both at the layer level and on the brush properties. There's no better way to mix various paint colours in Photoshop than with blending modes!

Check out the video tutorial for this project to see exactly how this image was created using the brushes provided in the resources project.

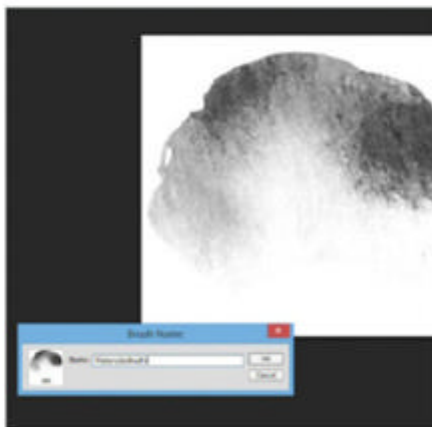


TURNING WATERCOLOUR INTO BRUSHES

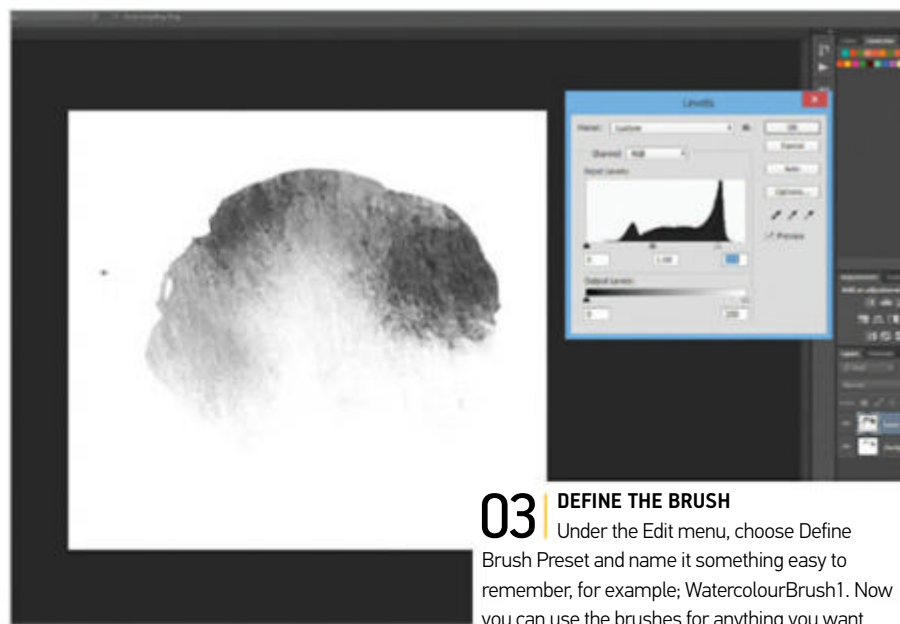
HOW TO TURN YOUR PHOTOS INTO BRUSHES FOR PHOTOSHOP



01 | DESATURATE THE IMAGE
Once you open the image and crop it so your desired colour spot is isolated, desaturate the image. Do this by opening the Hue/Saturation dialogue box and pulling the saturation all the way down so it's black-and-white.



02 | ADJUST THE LEVELS
Next adjust the levels so the whites are pure white. Do this by moving the left slider in the Levels dialogue box. Be aware that the way the image looks at this point is the way the brush will look.

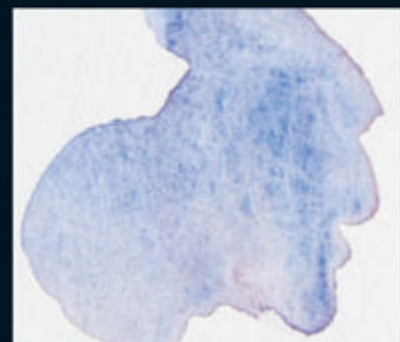


03 | DEFINE THE BRUSH
Under the Edit menu, choose Define Brush Preset and name it something easy to remember, for example; WatercolourBrush1. Now you can use the brushes for anything you want.



32 WATERCOLOUR BRUSHES

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Download and install our collection of watercolour brushes. Use them to follow along with the painting project or to add flavour to your own work. Free for your own personal use.



32 WATERCOLOUR TEXTURES

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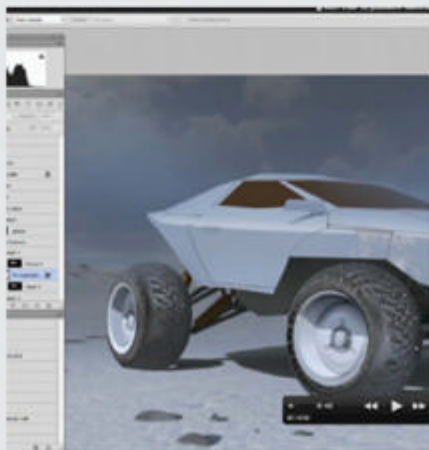
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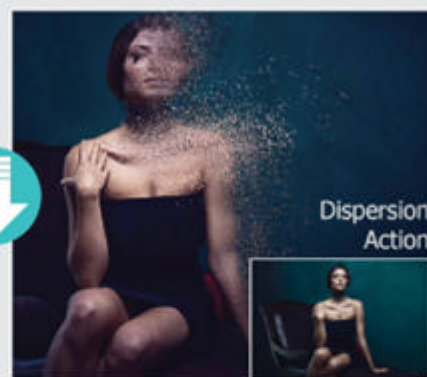
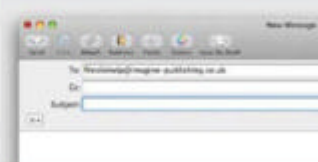


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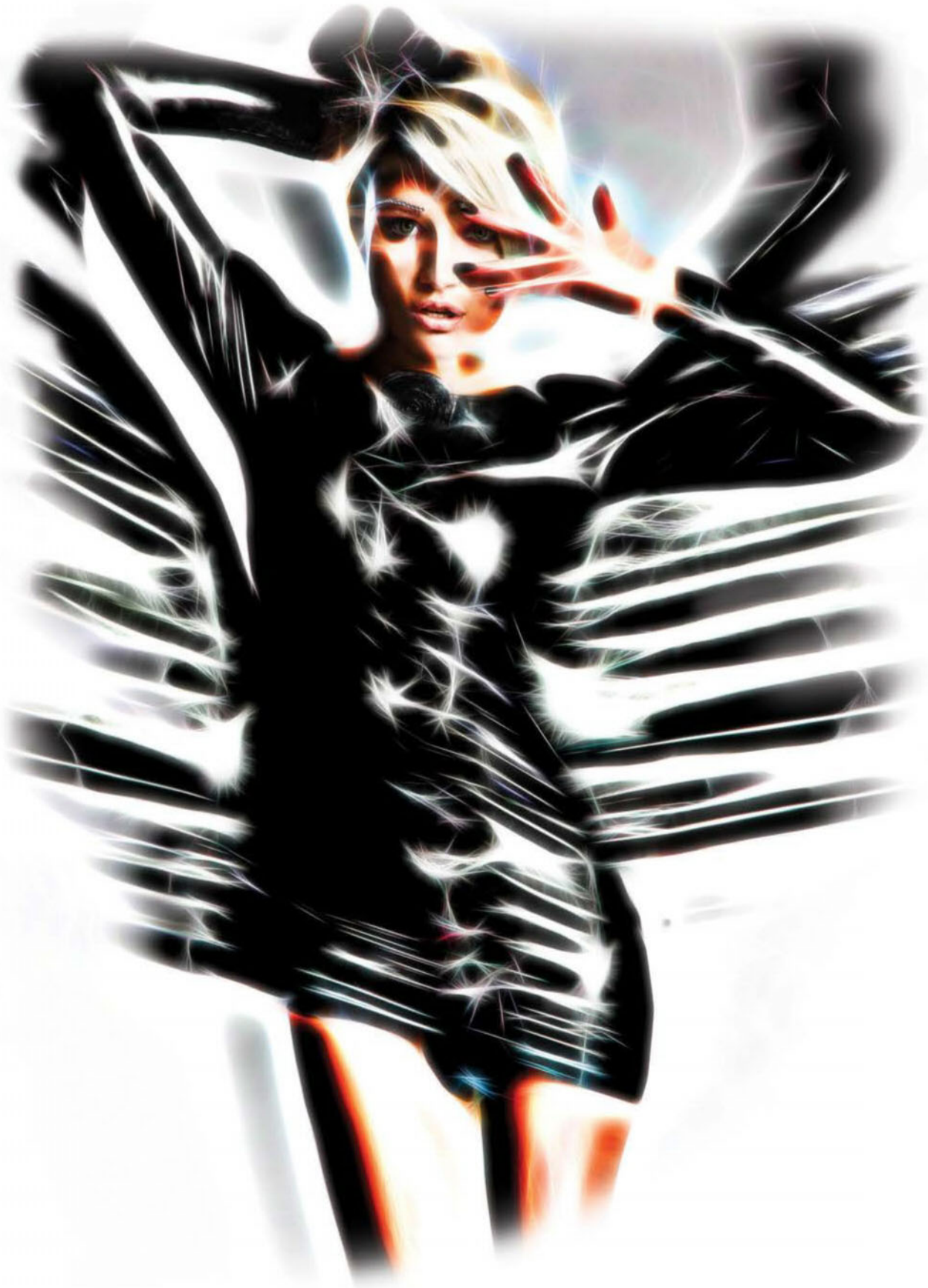
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